THE NEW YORK LEDGER

DEVOTED TO LITERATURE ROMANCE THE NEWS AND COMMERCE

VOL. XXVIII. ROBERT BONNER, 115 & 117 NASSAU AND 52 SPRUCE STS. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28, 1872. TERMS, $2 PER ANNUM, IN ADVANCE. NO. 45.

ALONE IN THE WOODS OF WINTER.

BY NATHAN D. URNER.

I.

When the little brook ceases to his icy sheath,
And his water-talk falls as the snow-flakes fly,
I wander alone, with bowed head,
Through the bare brown woods and the fields of snow.

And dream of how green
The same dear scene,
When you and I roamed in harmber of old,
And life and love rolled in a river of gold.

II.

The little brook then was a creature of life,
And the woods were filled with the song of birds,
And those woods and fields with flowers were rife,
And the whole, with your tender and sweet
love-words,
Was a wonderful dream,
In which all did seem
A rhythmic weighing of passionate hours,
Made up of the trees, and the fields, and the
flowers.

III.

How little we guessed of the rude fate then,
Which has torn us apart, and scattered us far,
Through the inhuman work of women and
men,
As life-blood fills, or as star from star!
Perchance you have long
In the stranger's grave,
Another love, Kyra! and kissed as mine,
To dead with pride at your beauty's shrine!

IV.

I only know that my own and heart
Has ayre been alone those days with
but
And here, in this world of winter spirit,
Your form still moves as it used to do;
But now seen, and then lost,
As I dream of the past,
Or born of the wind that so wild and shrill
Makes the snow o'er the landscape whirl.

THE FIRE-SPREADERS;
OR,
The Burners of Chicago.

By LEON LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE RED MAGICIAN," "RED KNIFE," "THE RIVAL KNIGHTS," "GHOST'S MESSAGE," "THE CLUB-FOOT BRAVE," "MARK HARDING'S LUCK," "THE PILOT AGAINST HAWLEY," ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

TO WHAT JACK'S KEY LED HIM.

That Jack Withers forgot all about his recent business and fortune, as he descended the cellar stairs, it seems he had intended, may be accounted for in two ways.

His thoughts were sure of the discovering he was likely to make in that quarter, to virtue of the monster key of which he had so boldly and promptly taken possession.

A key of the stairs he suddenly hailed, by reason of a suggestion of prudence, but he almost instantly resumed his downward course, with an air of defiant contempt.

The mental whirl he had undergone to bestir his physical instincts could have been read upon his features.

It was a thought of the designing rascal who had left behind him, and of the possibility that silent enemies might be close up behind him.

The reflection too which had caused him to resume his descent so quickly was equally terrible upon its consequences.

When a man is half determined to kill himself, he does not always have I heard of the horrible death of Alice Amos," so ran his reflection, "he don't care a straw what other and desperate ruffian assassins may be lurking to assail."

And with this he went steadily downward to the bottom of the stairs.

The cellar in which he now found himself was about twenty feet square, as he soon assured himself by the compound agencies of the key, candle-light, and sight. The walls were all smooth and plastered, and contained not the least projection of a window, door, closet or other characteristic open to any sort of reasonable suspicion.

As regarded contents, there was nothing in the cellar save several barrels ranged along the walls, and a bin about seven feet square which contained several bushels of potatoes.

The barrels were exactly in the centre of the cellar. As to the barrels, some of them contained flour, and others pork, and some of them contained solids, such as peas, but there was nothing in the appearance of either barrels or the barrels that for an instant attracted the intruder's attention.

"Am on the wrong track, certain," he mentioned, pausing in his explorations. "Must go back."

He took a few retreating steps and then halted, and looked into the mysterious key.

"Impossible there's a secret in the case," he reflected, "why, the key is made for a far more place for storage. I must look for a button in the wall—for some big key-hole covered with paint, for some kind of a door, or some other explosion to this here cellar. In short, I must look further."

He made a new survey of the place, but fruitlessly.

The only thing that looks odd," he mused, half-aloud, "is the potatoes in the bin in the middle of nothing. Potatoes are well enough in their way, but they would have been more to my taste in any other corner. Seems to me an honest big enough."

Here he took hold of one of the four corner posts of the tin, and gave it a stout push from him.

To his astonishment, the whole bin yielded to the pressure, and swung away.

"Good," said Withers to himself. "This bin is mounted on wheels or rollers—something in such a way that it's easy to move it to one side."

Dropping upon his hands and knees, he peered under the bin, and discovered that it was indeed mounted upon small iron wheels, and that it was susceptible of being secured so firmly in place that no ordinary power could move it. And looking still closely, he could detect fences of the track upon which the wheels had recently made in being rolled over the hard bottom of the cellar.

"Good," he repeated. "When a thing begins to go, the proper way is to keep it going. It is in this way that one reaches the conclusion."

He accordingly pushed the bin again, and it again retreated. Continuing to push it before him, Withers came very near tumbling into a well-like aperture which suddenly yawned before his feet in the cellar-floor.

The well-like aperture was disclosed was about four feet in diameter, and that it was of eight feet deep. The sides were of brick; very neatly laid. A ladder, fixed in this cylindrical space, the top of it just reaching to the level of the cellar bottom.

At sight of this singular orifice, the eyes of Jack Withers lighted up intelligently. He knew that he was gaining possession of a clue to the mystery of his imprisonment.

Holding his candle down into the well-like space, his friend saw that it was dry and clean. Falling in this, he began descending the ladder, and soon reached its foot, landing on a solid brick pavement.

And here it was that Jack found the object he was seeking—the working hole for his key.

In one side of the circular pit was a small but stout iron-bound door, studded with immense rivets and nails, and at one side of this door was a key-hole, which corresponded to the key. A single glance assured Jack of this correspondence. He took out the key, and trying the key and turning it. Then he pushed open the formidable door, and peered into the space thus disclosed to his sight.

To his increased surprise, he found himself looking into a vaulted, dome-like cavity as large as the cellar he had traversed. The vault-like roof, like the walls on every side, were of brick, neatly pointed, and were not particularly damp.

But it was not to these features of the scene before him that the gaze of Jack Withers was directed. At his first glance into the vault his eyes had encountered something of vastly greater importance.

There was not only a light in this vault, but various articles of furniture and clothing—a small table, a couple of chairs, a modest display of bedding, clothes, remnants of a meal—all the necessaries, in fact, of no ordinary kind, for the maintenance of human life and three persons, but would, it occurred to the door that Jack's astonished gaze had immediately fallen.

He carried his hand to his eyes, and thus shut out from view the startling vision.

It was no wonder that he could not at first receive the evidence of his senses.

Within this secret vault, upon a little low wooden bed, a young girl—more child she seemed to Will, as she lay—raged in reading a book. She was wrapped in a heavy shawl.

The little table to which she have made reference was drawn up near her, and between her and the door. The candle-light shed from the light standing upon it fell over her shoulder, and directly upon the page she was perusing.

And the thing that made this lovely apparition so surprising and unreal to Jack Withers, was the fact that this beautiful being—with her golden hair, her sweet violet eyes and features—looked even turn toward the entrance of the vault.

For a full minute this state of things continued—the girl continuing to read, and Jack Withers continuing to crouch at the entrance of the vault, scared and spell-bound.

"Oh, my God!" escaping, in fit, sir?" suddenly demanded the girl's sweet voice, with some impatience and annoyance.

Withers stared at her still more wildly.

"Oh, my God!" he repeated.

"Well—of course—you I'm coming," stammered Jack, at a loss what else to say.

At this response the girl started violently, dropping her book, and turned a startled gaze upon the intruder.

"It's another of them," she said, in a whisper. "There are three of them."

Jack looked nervously behind him and up-stairs, for the second time listening.

"No, there's only one of me," he assured the girl confidently.

"Well, what are you here for?" demanded the girl sternly.

"I—I was following the key?"

"Following the key?"

"I wanted to see where it would lead me," protested Jack, holding up the key to the young lady's view, and beginning to recover his equanimity. "I said to myself that such a key as this must certainly open the way to some great treasure, but little did I think that it would lead me into the retreat of a fairy."

"How did you come by that key?"

"I took it from the fellow up stairs—that fellow who's asleep in the room next to the kitchen, and snoring like a young hurricane. Say, I'm hungry, I am. That chop up stairs is a sort of Bluebeard, and you are his young wife. Have you got a bite to eat?"

To his wondering amusement he stopped short, and looked, and looked again at the face of the vault, looking up into the girl's face eagerly.

"Why, good—I'm not married," she replied almost smiling at the comical aspect of his visage. "But who are you, and why are you here? Are you in Underbee's employ? Are you another of his confederates?"

"I'm nobody's 'vile confederate.' I'm plain Jack Withers, at your service."

The effect of this statement upon the girl was to cause her to spring to her feet, and to look eagerly upon one of Jack's shoulders as he also arose. Her cheeks turned pale as lime, while her features grew rigid and convulsive with emotions she could not instantly name.

"Jack Withers?" she repeated. "Auntie's nephew? Can it be possible? Can it be that you have come back finally, after all these years of absence?"

"You see, young lady; and I must say that I've been away for a monster, toler-ably well pushed about, not to say abused."

"You are really the son of Auntie Amos's brother Will?"

"Well, as to that, I never knew that Jerusaly Withers was 'Auntie' to anybody—"

"Oh, you are the same! you are Auntie's brother! I know that you are. I call Mrs. Withers Auntie because she has been so good to me, because she came and spoke to me to call her so. She couldn't call me her own child, and she didn't want me to call her mother, but she was very kind to me, and I wanted me to call her Auntie. And I was glad to have her do it, for I've been so good to so say aunt could have been, or as an own mother could have been, to a waiter."

"Well, this takes the wind out of my sails," muttered Withers wonderingly. "I never would have suspected Jerusaly of being an Auntie to a step-mother's daughter. Say you're a pretty young lady, you are."

"Why, don't you know that is?" You do, I'm sure. I've heard you talk of me often enough from the two villains who brought me here."

"Blessed if I came here for any such purpose! I came here—to see what that key was keeping and guarding, and that's all there is about it."

"And you don't know who I am?"

"Not the least in the world."

"Then I'll tell you. But it will be a great surprise for you. I'm Alice Amos."

Had the solid earth opened under the feet of Jack Withers he could not have been more astounded. He smiled until his retrograde movement was stopped by the wall, and then he leaned heavily against his support, hardly able to keep himself from falling.

"I'm Alice Amos," went on Alice—for the mysterious young girl was no other than she—"I'm Alice Amos, and you are Jack Withers. And then you said that I was turned up in the cabin, and that's why you were so surprised to see me. Now, I'm locked up in the cabin still."

"So—you wasn't?" Jack managed to say, as he rubbed his eyes vigorously.

"No, I wasn't."

"Are you sure? But of course you are, seeing that you've been before me for days and days."

"When did you return, Mr. Withers?"

"The very same day."

"And how have you been all these years?"

"Why, as near as I can make out you are Alice Amos?"

He put up his light, and gazed with as much admiration as surprise upon her fair, young features.

"And you are Mr. Withers?" breathed Alice, looking up into the very light and heat a scarcely more upon the features before her.

"How glad I am—my poor! I've wanted to have to ask you."

"And how much I have to tell you! I was never so pleased in my life before," said Jack, as his whole face glowed and beamed excitedly. "The old woman told me a long story about her sending you back after some money that she had in the pantry, and as you did not come back to her, she could do no less, naturally, than conclude that you had been caught by the flames. How did it happen that you didn't go back to her?"

"Why, I was seized by a desperate villain."

"The fellow up stairs," put in Withers.

"Well, yes, this is the villain. Just as I was taking the money from the pantry he appeared upon me, pressed his hand over my mouth, and carried me away into the woods, where he knew of the cabin by the lake."

"That Auntie couldn't see what had become of me."

"Of course not. And what is this man?"

"His name is Will Underbee. He has asked me several times to marry him, and I have as often refused, until he has become desperate."

"I see," commented Withers again. "An enterprising young man in this Mr. Underbee evidently. He was sharp to avail himself of the fact to make the old woman think you were lost."

"He kindled the fire himself," interrupted Alice. "I've thought it all out since I have been shut up here. He set fire to the cabin himself. He had another ruffian with him, and they had a horse and wagon in waiting. They even had ropes ready with which to tie me."

"I see," muttered Jack once more. "And so this Mr. Underbee brought you to this attic and locked you up?"

"Yes, sir. He brought me here, and says I shall never leave it unless I consent to marry him to become his wife. He owns this house, having lately bought it; at least he says so, but I can't believe him, for the reason that no one ever knew him to have any money. The place once belonged to a famous counterfeiter, and it was here that this counterfeiter did his coining, this is my opinion."

"All this is strange enough. These ruffians have been up to mischief—from their stand-point, I suppose."

"I suppose so. But I am afraid of them so much, and I've been so far away from here immediately, Mr. Withers, won't you—"

"Of course—immediately."

"And you will take me to Paul—to Aunt Amos?" continued the girl, all eagerness and excitement. "You'll take me home instantly?"

"Of course I will."

"Let us go now. Paul and Auntie must be very much worried about me. And Underbee and Sheet may step us at any moment. Let us go now, and shut me up again."

"Come on, then! Come!"

Turning quickly, Jack was about to lead the way from the vault, when heavy footsteps were suddenly heard directly over his head. He turned nearly as pale as did Alice Amos at the sound.

"It's late!" he breathed. "That ruffian has waked up. The key must have been missed. We shall soon have one or both of the villains down here."

"But if you are armed, and I am armed, and I shall never, never escape!" whispered the girl. "Is there any way to wait—to get away unseen, if you can—to guard me Paul—"

"I'll see you Paul, as true as I live, if I make a row and a scandal. He will some day be called Underbee and Sheet. And those ruffians may kill you rather than let you escape. Come, come, this way!"

He led the way from the vault to the door for you—to find you—to take you to Paul. Come on, come steady, my fair; duty is to report to my employer."

"Oh, then, don't take a moment. This is the best corner we can take—the only one, in fact."

"Good-bye, then. I may not get another chance to see you. Here or here or here, whichever suits the vault—closed and locked the door, then ascended the ladder to the cellar, taking the key of the mysterious room with him.

To replace the bin of potatoes over the well-like aperture in the same condition—account of for by the presence of a man in the house—in which he had found it, was the work of a moment, but it was not accomplished an instant too soon. These alarming footsteps were again heard, and rose loudly.

"Guess he's coming!" thought Withers. He was right. He had barely time to throw out his light and take refuge behind the intruder, when a man began descending them, candle in hand.

This man was Tripler Smith.

Curious where that candle is," Tripler was growling. "I'm sure I left one on the kitchen-table, and I don't have many in. I thought I never should find another. Curious where that key can be, too. I've looked beside and where I went to look. Possibly it may have been left in the lock. I'll see."

Moving to the door, he took hold down, he descended the ladder leading to the vault.

Without and without the position of the staircase, and he lost no time in stepping up to the kitchen above and unheard, all sounds of his movements being covered by those of Tripler Smith, who was moving about. It turned for his pipe into room where he had found it, was the work of a moment. The kitchen door was now ajar, Smith having just left it so, and in another moment Jack had slipped from the house.

And now he drew a long breath of relief.

"Good," he thought. "I feel ruffian will find his key, and nothing will be known of my visit. And now for Chicago!"

CHAPTER VI.

A GENTLEMAN FROM FLORIDA.

It was night in Chicago—night of Tuesday, the fourteenth day of September, 1871.

In the elegant and magnificent residence upon Wabash Avenue, a man of fifty or fifty-five years was pacing restlessly at his ease upon a rich sofa, with an air of complacent self-importance. He was a man of stout build, with a florid cast of complexion that seemed to redness. He was not particularly coarse, but his gestures attested that he was strongly animal in his tastes, and that he cultivated his sated only so far as he was compelled to in making it minister to the creeds of his body. His hair was bright red, and he had a grayish tinge, and perhaps his eyes were a trifle too prominent. Indeed, he was a man of great self-possession and power, which he used officiously in his intercourse with his fellow-men. He was in his dressing-gown and slippers, and was evidently making himself comfortable for the evening and around him, and some wine and a collation upon the table at his elbow.

This man was Marion Edgerly, a well-known dealer in skins, furs, hides, leather, and general speculator. He was sometimes a banker, and at other times a broker, but was regarded as make money in every business to which he put his hand, and was generally considered to have accumulated a handsome fortune.

At about 10, Edgerly was the glow of lights, the glow and warmth of fires, the reflections of numerous mirrors, the sparkle of elegant furniture and rich lace—all the comfortable and luxurious, in fact, by which the minions of the rich are so often distinguished. The carpet under his feet was gorgeous, the sparkle carpet under his feet that his economical habits were not always apparent.

"Where is it, Mexon?" he asked, as a servant sudden appeared in response to a summons of the bell-cord near the door with a profound salutation.

"A letter, sir."

Mr. Edgerly took the letter from the silver salver upon which it had been brought, and hastily tore it open.

Before he glanced at the envelope the redness of Mr. Edgerly's face deepened a little, and he frowned a little as he took a sheet of stationery, as he recognized the hand-writing.

"How came this letter here?" he asked.

"I found it in the street door, sir, and went away immediately."

"Very well. It is a number of those beggarly epistles with which every gentleman of wealth is continually annoyed. I always know but some old humbug was in the hall awaiting an answer, and has not to."

Mexon assented to the observations of his employer by sundry inclinations, and then withdrew.

"Another subscription!" breathed Edgerly savagely, as he rumpled in his hand the sheet he had just received. "I'll find means to get rid of those confounded fellows before much longer, I'm certain!"

The sound of wheels resounded upon Edgerly's hearing, and a carriage drew up at the door.

A few moments later three persons mounted the steps, rang the bell, and were admitted to the house, and soon after, and her daughter.

The two latter were Mrs. Edgerly and Miss Edgerly, and the living-rooms, but a gesture from Edgerly to Mexon, who was about to show them, and she also withdrew.

She was a tall, stout woman, with immense development of bust, with heavy limbs, thick, coarse hair, and a face which was not unlike the most devoted application of pearl-white and rouge, and which could not conceal a not interesting pallor. She was essentially vulgar-looking, and her dress, which was made of the richest and most polished manner, seemed to creep into the most unfortunate folds, and to be in the most unfortunate places, and unfashionable. She was dressed regally in a heavy purple silk, and wore a rich point lace, and a magnificent set of diamonds.

Miss Edgerly, taking a large, lovely, love!" she exclaimed, in a loud and affected voice, as she threw off her wrappings, with one of her large but richly jewelled hands upon the back of a chair.

"Yes, mamma," she returned languidly, in a voice that sounded music and polished by comparison with her mother's. "It is easy to few words to you."

Closing one of the doors leading into the hall, then came back to his wife, who had seated herself.

"I've just received another letter from that fellow Jack Withers," he began.

"She just now I've heard of," replied she says she wants five hundred dollars, and if she is not paid she will go to Jerusaly, and we'll be waiting at the usual place at midnight to receive the money."

"Well, Harlot?"

"Well, I suppose I shall have to take it to her, as the least of two evils, but I must say that I am getting heartily sick of the whole nuisance. It's not so much the money she gets from me, as the annoyance she gives me, that makes me hate her to the day of her death. I am satisfied that she is a source of discomfort, and that she makes free among her associates with my good name—"

"But all that habits of the back alums will

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

never go yon the least harm, Harlon," interrupted Mrs. Edgerly. "Let us have this the creature will soon think herself to death, and that her secrets will die with her. In the mean time—if you want my advice—I would not mention it to a living soul. Your own reputation as a scholar is at stake. Should such a thing get out at present, Bosh Flora and Montague are in a fair way to make good spoons, and I want to get them off our hands before we grapple seriously with any difficulties growing out of that Jones business—if any such can likely to come. By the way, you have heard anything about that girl lately?"

"Nothing since I was in the city last winter," Neville Dandolass still living with Mrs. Edgerly, and being poor and proud enough to receive the attentions of some rustic lover. She'll probably marry some blacksmith, or the laborer in the course of a year or two, and settle down in that neighborhood. In my case, there is not the least chance of her ever crossing our path, or of her ever receiving the least help in her progress. It was a serious weakness for Withers to have taken a fancy to her, and I am glad she died and none was Alice Aiken, but, after all, since my thousand families of the Union that the girl will ever trouble us."

"This I do not think you have any reason to complain of our affairs," said Mrs. Edgerly beautifully. "All is prosperous and serene, to have Mrs. Smallett exporting money to Europe, and Flora and Montague on the eve of that she has a knowledge of a number of our secrets; but she can't last forever. It you want any immediate, love, for those little imperfection, look around you. Have not our plans all been successful? Have you an unbalanced distinction? Are not my parties the talk of society? Are diamonds unquestionable, and wardrobe the envy of half the ladies in the city? Are we not all in good health, and in fortune comfortably realized for life? And have not all those successes grown out of that simple but weighty resolve of ours of many years ago, to get rid of both John Ames and his daughter, and to appropriate to ourselves John Ames' fortune?"

"And it is for all these reasons that I have the expectation of action in all these matters," said Edgerly, looking around him, and speaking in whisper, but with the firmness of a not completely closed to remorse. "If at any time I have certain misgivings of conscience in the evening, I have only to look around me, as you suggest, to feel that my action toward John Ames and his daughter, however blamable it may have been, was one that could not have been a friend not be taken. In the actual consolation of the world, and in the ordinary course of existence, but it is one that I should never have secured but for the start that Ames' fortune gave me. Neither of us can be expected to speak of when we were married save a fair reputation, and the expenses of a family kept in under the harrow thereafter. But there is no use of my talking of these matters now.

"But the least," returned Mrs. Edgerly, smiling, "I am glad to see you in such good humor, Harlon. All we have been has been necessary. But for our courage of years ago we should to-day be nobodies, and our children would be beggars. For my part, there is nothing I wouldn't endure rather than go back to the abysses of poverty and obscurity myself to-day in which we were found by which we were consumed—I should say wasted."

"And I," said the couple were with worthy of each other.

Still we their one gospel.

To revel in ostentatious wealth was the one object of their existence.

The only allusion they had for their son and daughter, and their chief care for the time was to assure them "good matches," and to surround them with the most costly and fashionable social and brilliant surroundings.

"We are, of course, upon all these matters," said Edgerly, arising, "and that is why we have been a subservient of all our undertakings. We have acted as one mind—or rather with the advantage of putting two sharp and resolute wits together. And after all, as you say, Bosh Flora and Montague are but the unwitched Mrs. Smallett is of very little account in comparison with all the real concerns of our life around us. She is rather an annoyance than a danger."

"And so all the rest of our pensioners," said Mrs. Edgerly lightly, "they are all duly cared for. The daughter is married, and in comfortable circumstances."

"Quite pretty, however, Robin—I must say that she is pretty," interrupted Edgerly, "and I am glad that she is married and happy."

"And I have repeatedly mentioned to you, you remember, that old Mrs. Withers wasted several hundred dollars—all her hard-earned savings—in giving the girl an opportunity for education, of which she must have taken a wonderful advantage."

"She was evidently intended to say that the girl is turned school-mistress in the west of Wisconsin, and that she will never trouble us by its Withers, he has never written to his old wife, at your express commands, and is living under your threats, at very little expense to us. And as to the girl's father, he is safe in Florida, in the care of Bushwick. The whole wall of safety and self-protection is now perfect around us, and all we have to do is to go on as we have been going—take every precaution, and wait the course of events for ourselves and our children."

"Yes, that is the programme," approved Edgerly, "and as observe step in this round of duties, I will now meet Mrs. Smallett again, I think, and give her the same she demands."

"And that is our best course, with her—at least for the present. Some of these days she will be married. Then your power will be complete, and rid of her at the hands of a husband, or some such instrument; but for the present, I repeat, manage her."

Bowing assent to this advice, Edgerly proceeded to equip himself for the evening, and on a pair of short boots, and exchanging his dressing-gown for a dress-coat, went to another room over it.

"You will find me here when you come back," said Mrs. Edgerly, when her husband was ready for departure, "for I shall not be free from anxieties as long as you go at such an hour, and upon such an errand."

"A very well, dear," returned the husband, as he stooped up his outer coat and drew a soft hat down his eyes; and with that he took his departure.

It was at least an hour past midnight when Edgerly returned to his home. It was a dark and stealthy step, and muffled so closely with the collar of his coat and with his hat pressed that but no one could have caught the least glimpse of his features. He was about to give himself admittance with a night key, when he found that he seemed from himself, and he found himself face to face with his wife.

"What!" so anxious as that?" was his first remark, in a light and careless voice.

Mrs. Edgerly caught some response, but her voice died away in an incoherent murmur. She moved, however, silently, with a sort of paralytic motion, closing the door, and then led the way to the dressing-room. Her husband, as he seemed to touched her forehead, in seating him off on a sofa, and looked at him as cold as death, and her eyes nearly as glassy as those of a corpse.

"Why, what ails you, Robin?" demanded Edgerly, looking keenly at her. "How your manner in changed since I went out upon this little expedition. You look as if you had seen a ghost. Has there been any affair of Mrs. Smallett has so completely upset you?"

Mrs. Edgerly made many efforts to speak, but this time succeeded in controlling her voice.

"It's not Mrs. Smallett," she declared, in a husky whisper. "But—what of her? Did you see her?"

"I did, and that matter is all right—at least for the present."

"Cautious! Don't speak so loud!"

"Cautious!" repeated Edgerly, staring at this wife in amazement. "And why this excess of caution in our own home?"

Edgerly had unconsciously raised his voice, and his wife now took him by the arm, as she looked shudderingly toward the stairs.

"Hush!" said she, in a low whisper. "You do not know what has happened here during your absence."

"Why, what has happened here?"

"Listen!" returned Mrs. Edgerly, struggling with her emotions. "Not long after you went away, I seated myself in the drawing-room before the fire, for I did not like to go to the theatre had chilled me. The children had all gone to bed, and I was left to myself. And while I sat there, thinking about all this business of Montague and Flora, I heard a step on the stairs, a kind step heard at the front door."

"A ring, you mean."

"No, a step."

"Well, a knock at the door is no killing matter, if it was a little late. Many of our country cousins knock for admittance when it is quite out at night."

"But there was something about that knock that was not like a knock at all, and at the minute I heard it I felt that it was the spot that trouble was coming. And while I sat as if glued to the chair the knock was repeated."

"Well, you didn't answer it, of course."

"Not until it was repeated for the fourth or fifth time—and then I did. I could no more bring down the children and servants—not, indeed, that I thought that the knocking could be intended for any one in a moment if his presence should become necessary."

"I see. And so you finally opened the door?"

"Yes, I finally opened the door, when in walked—I will not undertake to say who. Give in here and see for yourself."

She produced a slip of crumpled pasteboard from her pocket, and handed it to her husband, who, bending over the eyes of her husband, read the name of the visitor who had called.

"A gentleman from Florida."

A victim shudder fell under the strokes of lightning quicker than Harlon Edgerly sank into his chair, and his wife fell upon the support of that brief announcement.

"Florida!" he repeated, hoarsely.

"Does he know?" he became strangely white, and he shook as if in convulsions.

"Yes, he knows," answered Edgerly, starting for a full minute the horrified gaze of his wife. "Why, Robin, what is the matter? Is that girl up in the woods near Berwick? He knows her whereabouts?"

"I couldn't make out she he was, he was so muffled up in his cloak and hat, and I was so frightened that I could not see. I only know that I didn't matter, that he was an old friend, and that he had come to see you on a visit."

"He was disguised, you say? Where is he now?"

"In the front chamber."

"In the front chamber?"

"The husband looked electrified.

"I could not help it," she said. "I was in vain that I mentioned the lateness of the hour in the circumstances. He said that he had left your steamboat at Jacksonville, and that he must be absent until morning; he said he could wait. All in that I mentioned to him your departure; he said he would take the responsibility of going to bed and waiting for you. And I was so scared, and he was so strange, and I was so frightened, and—and—and, I—I didn't dare to call Montague, and so I admitted him myself."

"And this gentleman from Florida, Edgerly, as he carried his hand involuntarily to a concealment.

"In the front chamber—as I told you."

"And you have not been in to see?"

"Yes, I have an idea."

"Well, what do you think he is?"

"I think he's the father of that girl in the woods near Berwick," said Mrs. Edgerly, with a shudder.

It would be difficult to describe the effect of these few words upon her husband.

He became even whiter in the bearing than had his wife been the night. Instantly, at one from the grave could hardly have been more terrible than the fact that he suspected the presence of the said John Ames then and there in his own house.

"And this gentleman from Florida," he said, as the scared blood returned to such torrents to be his face as had left it. "You really think he's John Ames?"

Mrs. Edgerly nodded dumbly.

"You can't say for a certainty whether he is or is not?"

"No; but who else can he be? Who else would be coming to us from Florida? And he said that he—"

She picked up the card which had fallen from her hands during her swoon, and looked again deceived the four words upon it with the name of the visitor written upon it.

"You are right, Robin," said Edgerly slowly. "It is he—he who could have come from—a gentleman from Florida?" Who else would be coming to us from Florida? Who else would be coming to us at this time of night, and by daylight, and he would have announced his coming with the name of Jones, and by not other Ames or Bushwick—and the latter floorly in possession of Bushwick's secret, and thinking about that Florida business? In size does he resemble Ames?"

Mrs. Edgerly again nodded, while she fanned herself violently.

"Is he tall, or short, or stout, or thin?"

"No. He kept it best forward, or turned from one, so as to conceal his face. His hair, his very eyebrows, were evidently false, and his voice was so hoarse, so unlike what we usually see."

"And he is undressed?"

In a foreign looking suit, with a large cloak, and a hat with a broad brim, and a heavy beard. And as I said, he kept his face in a moving posture, with a pretence of being polite. I doubt's deeply that he wished to look at or get anything like a view of his features. Another thing, he is very pale—almost like death. Those words, 'a gentleman from Florida,' completely upset me, I believe, and I suppose, and I'm sure that I really dared to look at him as I ought to."

"Did he see you?"

"See! How could he help seeing? Wouldn't any one see a lady who let in at the door at such an hour, that we are scared nearly out of our wits?"

"Scared? Why, so—"

"Yes, I was scared enough. Just look in this mirror before you go."

Edgerly turned his eyes in the direction pointed out by his wife, and saw his reflection in the mirror.

"By Jo look a little out of sorts," he consoled, with a ghastly attempt at a smile. "We are not ourselves."

"Not to my knowledge—that is, I didn't see myself at any especial time."

"Of course not. But he has arms concealed in his cloak, and he has come to kill us. He will be seen with a knife."

"Yes, he did. I took a look from the door, but saw no arms, nothing about his person, save—he fitted or served."

"What could you give for coming here at such a late hour?"

"Any strong excuse, if I remember rightly. He did say that he had seen a light in the window, and that he had been a light in the window."

"But the light is no excuse for entering the house at all at such a time."

"No, and he didn't make an excuse of it. He merely said that he happened to be in the neighborhood, as late as it was, and that he would avail himself of the circumstance to pay you a visit he had long been intending to make."

"Did he say that you told him that I was another Edgerly? that I had moved away? that I had died years ago?"

"I began in that way, with some vague purpose of the sort, but he shut me up in a minute. He said that he had business with Mr. Harlon Edgerly, and with no other Edgerly whatever, and that he was already aware, not only of your continued existence and health, but also of your residence at this house—he having made inquiries in the station—"

"Ah, he has been making inquiries then?" interrupted Edgerly, his face again pulling white, to his lips. "From what he said, I should say he has been in the neighborhood for some time past."

"Why, what has happened here?"

"Listen!" returned Mrs. Edgerly, struggling with her emotions. "Not long after you went away, I seated myself in the drawing-room before the fire, for I did not like to go to the theatre had chilled me. The children had all gone to bed, and I was left to myself. And while I sat there, thinking about all this business of Montague and Flora, I heard a step on the stairs, a kind step heard at the front door."

"A ring, you mean."

"No, a step."

"Well, a knock at the door is no killing matter, if it was a little late. Many of our country cousins knock for admittance when it is quite out at night."

"But there was something about that knock that was not like a knock at all, and at the minute I heard it I felt that it was the spot that trouble was coming. And while I sat as if glued to the chair the knock was repeated."

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"Not particularly. Why?" returned Mrs. Ames.

"Well, to me they have a very touching appearance. How look! how lonely they stand this house!"

"Then, the boy that is most all the time with them has just gone down from our door-step," said Mrs. Ames.

"Boy! He will, and inquire that he wanted, my dear," said Mr. Austin.

"Another patient, and a servant indeed, Mrs. Austin made she desired inquiry.

"He wanted to engage clearing of the grounds—and the more than stopped to say."

"Poor little fellow! And what did you say to him, James?" asked Mrs. Austin.

"I laughed at him, and told him he had better go and see on the wharf and engage to belong to unload vessels, sir," replied the man.

"You ought not to have said that to him, James. Poor child! I wish you had let me see him being here."

"Yes, papa, you would not have let him go away with such a sad face, I know you would."

"James, keep a look-out for him. Tell him to come and help you, and pay him well. He is a manly little fellow, and I think would make a very useful servant. Will you remember, James?"

"Yes, sir," James answered.

And then turning to his wife, said:

"I wish, my dear, either to-day or to-morrow, you would reach down my Christmas box. You would make up a basket or box of such things as you think proper to send to the little ones, and send it over with the best wishes of ours."

"I will do so, my dear," she answered, and left the children exclaimed.

Then as carriage stopped before the house, from which a gentleman sprung out, and ran up the steps, ringing the door-bell.

"Uncle Charley! Hurra! Uncle Charley has come!"

"Uncle Charley" was a handsome, middle-aged man entered the room, catching first one, then another, in his arms, with a hearty embrace.

"Why, where is Uncle Charley's coming, the little ones across the street were quite forgotten in the excitement of the moment. But it was so long—all preparations to make, and so many necessary calls on us, that we could not leave home. Besides, we wished to remember such things. But to-morrow morning we will go over to see them, and will purchase some little presents for them."

"Uncle Charley looked gravely. The memory set of little ones the Austins were forgotten in the excitement of the moment, but spare the time from the beautiful and already overburdened Christmas preparations. Uncle Charley's heart, however, was friends innumerable.

"Where is Mrs. Ames, Lily, a little three-year-old fairy, stood on a chair arranging her self before the looking-glass. "Where is Mrs. Ames? Presently she sang out in a pretty, lisping voice:

"Oh, Willie, come see! Is that a Christmas present?"

Uncle Charley was at the window, with a sad and he cried out:

"Why, Lily! It is a little coffin."

All hastened to the window then, with awed and solemn faces. After all Uncle Charley's heart Austin said.

"Mary, you had send over some things to those little orphans."

"I have intended to this morning. I thought I would be just as well. I will send so much to think of," answered Mrs. Austin, in tone of regret.

"*The lads* now to comfort *one* of them," Mr. Austin said soon returning.

Yes, too late to comfort little May.

The little coffin was gone, and Uncle Charlie and had failed much, grown visibly thinner, and his face had a pinched and pale look.

"Mamma, I'm so glad! I'll soon be well!" he said, faintly.

For a second she stood up on her feet—her heart seemed to stop—an expression of agony on her beautiful, pale face.

"Yes, indeed. That big boy is full as ever it can be with goodies and dolls, an'it, it, and Willie and Lily, and all the rest of them, with the assistance of a servant, carried in a large basket.

"Mary, Mary, where are you? Don't you hear me? Come here!"

He ran joyously in. The smiles fled—a look of terror took their place. He knew by his mother, so tearful and sad, and George Austin.

"Mary is the matter, mamma, dear? Why wake up?"

"I have tried to comfort him, and I have plan how happy May was, away with the angels," said Mrs. Austin, and then she turned and stand that May was gone from them; and that they would see her no more, and that her dear head rested, he wept himself to sleep.

Uncle Charley had stolen over the merry face of Austin house. The children watched with awed faces the little coffin, and the sight of little neighbors used to sit, and wondered for a little while how the coffin was.

Mrs. Austin's pleasure was marred, for a time, by grief for the loss of little May, who came the thought:

"I am glad I remembered those poor little children."

It is never too late to do right and good. Mrs. Austin's children left, and went to pay a day or anything to help them in their trouble. They knew their name, and went to see Mr. Austin.

"Papa, I believe. I think she is a widow."

"Grayson" exclaimed Uncle Charley. "Tell me about them."

"The little fellow told me his pops had been sick a long time."

Eve Willie had finished his story Uncle Charley was crossing the street, to the great astonishment of his sister and brother-in-law.

Two hours passed before he returned. Then he came in with a beaming face, and said that he had no desired friend; that his sister-in-law was principally to find George Grayson's father, and that he would be able to do all for the fortune he had made.

"I have just now to those he loved the debt of gratitude I owed to him," said Uncle Charley, "and I am happy. I feel that I am."

When all others pronounced me dead, he still believed me alive, and never ceased to search for me. Thanks, James, saved me.

And when he bowed down to sleep that night, he thought of the little children, and of the

A CHESTNUTING TOGETHER.

BY LUCIE L. TITLE.

The dim old woods were sere and brown,
The sunny sedgetops gone,
And purpling mists rose cold and chill,
As we roamed the hills that day,
But what cared I for barren fields,
Or for the dreary way,
When, hand in hand, sweet Nell and I
Went chestnuting together?

I slack the trees; from laden boughs
The nuts came rattling fast;
She gathered, well, and all the rest
The happy miser threw past.
"Why, Nell, you're greedy," thought I,
"Enough for ninety wealthier,
A dozen for a beggar!"
So chestnuting together.

I spied the prettiest there, to shield
Her tender head, and said,
"To ever think the thorns and burrs
Could hurt your pretty head!
You'll need a stronger arm to-day
For life's temptations weather.
To guard it right, when you and I
Go chestnuting together."

It's twenty years and more since
Snow, land in hand, we sped
And plighted there our troth, beneath
The old love-lighted wood.
Ah, how that day's sweet memory greet,
In her tool busy hands!
My Nellie's child and brighter Will
Are chestnuting together!

They stand to-day where we stood then,
At the parting of the ways;
For them th' entrancing hours pass by
In the same delicious dream.
For ever will live while time shall keep
Its record, that day,
And youth and manhood may will go
A chestnuting together.

A BONE of CONTENTION;
—OR—
The Waldemar Succession.

By MRS. HARRIET LEWIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE SCARLET WOMAN," "THE BARLEY'S SCHOOL," "THE OLD HOMESTEAD," "THE OLD VILLAGE SCHOOLMAN," "A DARING GAME," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER LV.

WHEREIN SEVERAL TRAGEDIES ARE BLENDED.

The evening was soft and mild, with a light, pleasant breeze, the like of which was all astir with stars. From the dampness of the ground, and the rich, fragrant perfume that came from the various evergreens and flowers, the trill of some belated bird, or the hum of a lonely insect, it was evident that Aberhaven was in the midst of the monotonous breath of swamp flowers mingled with the inhalation that comes from the sea. There was a strange hush, a soft, sweet stillness, which nothing but nature such as we have mentioned.

Lord Waldemar and the Hungarian Count met, seated side by side in the low basket chairs, every by a fat and sleepy negro, who dozed over the narrow, ill-carried road, but never lost sight of the two men who were thus unclassified fish. Every now and then the Count was looking straight forward with his dark eyes, her face deadly white, and would look upon it of awful suspense and anxiety. His handsome head was bare, even with his own suit was tortured with strange hopes and fears, and his own entire existence seemed hung upon him.

He turned upon his hand and looked closely about the darkening landscape, and was relieved from her bliss and lovely eyes that went to his heart.

"You are worn out, dear Lady Rothsmere," he said with unaccustomed tenderness. "All this has been too much for you. I believe that you have not slept since leaving London. I ought not to have allowed you to come to me. Our present business is of no moment, and sympathies makes you feel too much for the sufferings of others."

The loving response will ever be ready on the Countess, in a low, quivering voice. "What shall soon be there."

"How pleasant it would be, if we were only carefree, to ride on forever under the soft shadows of such nights as this," said Lord Waldemar, with awkward sentimentality. "For me, I must seem almost a grandfather to you, Countess. You are a young girl, and I think you many years married to Count Rothsmere."

"Seven years."

"He was many years older than you. I have not met him for a few months, and as he is leave a great blank in your life which can never be filled?" said he, she and Thomas, with a thrill of eagerness in his voice.

The beautiful Countess looked down, and answered:

"Count Rothsmere was one of the truest, noblest, and most manlike gentlemen who ever lived. My lord, and I believe that you will be more earnestly—perhaps too much grieved for him than I am. I am still young, still friendless, and I have no one to love. All the garnered strength and sweetness of my heart was given to Count Rothsmere. He was called by the world eccentric, cold-hearted, unbelieve, a woman-hater, but I knew him as he was, a noble, strong, naturally great-souled man. My dear lord, he was my shelter, my stronghold, and when I lost him I lost heaven."

Here Lord Waldemar, Count Rothsmere was not blessed with children, my lord, but my husband's sons, all older than I, are brothers and more to me. But I am not here even as I love them."

If they did not love you, Lady Rothsmere, they would be barbarians, or worse," cried the Baron, gallantly, yet earnestly. "I have known you but a short time, Countess, but a few short weeks, but I love you as I never expected to love any woman again. You are young, beautiful, and I am old enough to be your father, but I am not to you with a tenderness of which I had not dreamed myself capable. I am older than you, but I love you as a young heart. I yielded that to my dear wife who is now in heaven, but she raised the truest love reverently. "She is still in me while no other woman can ever be so to me. I am with the clinging devotion of my riper years, and I am certain that I could punish and fighting trail for an idolized child. Other men have sons, but I have not one. Countess, may I not be more than with greater love than that I bear you."

"Don't!" she whispered, putting up her hand. "Don't speak so to me. You will be sorry—you will!"

"And why? You are not promised to be married."

"No, O no. But I shall never marry again."

"You are young to say that, thirty years of age, one does not lay aside all human feelings. You are not a nun, Countess. My Lady Rothsmere, I am a young man, and childless, loveless. Come to me. Be my daughter. Make sunshine in my lonely home. Let me have your smiles and your sunny eyes to greet me when I come. Let me have your noble companionship, the benefit of your bright, and sparkling intellect, and your good wisdom. I shall be a greater and a better man with your companionship. Lady Rothsmere, and I believe you with such rare devotion to your husband's memory that you will be a true friend. Come to me then, I implore you."

His stern face softened into a yearning tenderness, his grand eyes glowed with a great and tender love for her. He put out his arm as if to draw her nearer to him, but she shrank back from him, her blue eyes full of grief and a sort of terror.

"I appreciate your kindness, my lord," she said, in a faltering voice, "but it may not be. I cannot become your wife. I can never make sunshine in your lonely house. I do love you, but I cannot be your wife. Do not love—it may not be, dear Lord Waldemar."

The Baron stilled a group.

"I have permitted myself to hope," he murmured. "I have been foolish, idiotic, but I thought you liked me, Lady Rothsmere: I fancied you were pleased when I came near."

"I do like you, my lord," said the Hungarian Countess distractedly. "I like you, and I admire you. I love to talk with you; to be in your presence; to hear your voice, so speedy in Parliament; but I love you as a friend, as a father, as a dear friend. I have had only been so good as to give me a father like you."

"I wish you were my daughter," cried Lord Waldemar, with a fierce energy. "Since you will not be my wife, I wish you could be my daughter. But I have no son for whom I might beg you to be his mother. I will not go back to Vienna, or to Hungary, and forget that you are in Aberhaven. You will take no step without consulting me."

"My lord, this lovely evening Honor Glint is when we are seeking a suitable party your own grandchild. She is bright, spirited, loving, talented and noble. She will take the place you would fain give me, and her love will cause you to forget me."

The stern old Baron trembled, and hot tears drooped from his fiery eyes so unused to weeping.

"I shall never forget you," he said broken-ly. "I have been mad to think that you could be my wife. I am not worthy to be so. I will never more to love you. I will forget that I attended me through life," and his tones took a bitter, unfeeling tone, "and you will have a son, a frank, generous youth, proved false and treacherous, and unworthy the daughter of an enemy. My nephew—you know what he is. I ask now my last favor in existence. I shall go down to my grave lonely and forsaken."

"My lord, my dear friend," she cried, with them. Forgive me, but have you not told me that you have a son in your own house? Your nephew is not your son. I believe that you suffered him in the security to force his will. My lord, he will always. God metes out to the triangle of bitterness and sorrow. To the dreadful wo may for ourselves are titles, ever still, a thousand-fold."

"You do not understand, my lady," cried his lordship impatiently. "I have married a disgusting woman, the daughter of a man I despise, and I could not leave him. I am not a cowardly and English prejudices. Lady Rothsmere—"

"I am English born and bred."

"Yes? I did not think it."

"I was a governess in the family of Count Rothsmere," said the Countess, "for nearly two years before my husband's death, and he moulded to him by a mutual friend. His daughter, a young girl of 16, was the victim of a disease which was not painful, but which rendered her helpless as a child. I went to Count Rothsmere's in Hungary, and I went there to teach her English, and to read to her sometimes. I soon her brother's tutor, and we had many social intercourse. The father knew my history, and he gave me a home for his child, and gather over his daughter's bed and she faded day by day before our eyes. The Count loved and begged me to make him happy before she died. They were all alone in a great house in the wilderness, although I was not noble nor wealthy. I was a governess, and I was a Protestant. We were married a week before the daughter died. She died in my arms, and it was over her child's grave that I vowed that I never repented his marriage to me, and every day I thanked God that I had been a shelter and a refuge. You see, my lord, I am comprehend that his position was a peculiar one."

I believed you to be of foreign birth, although you speak English with such fluency and purity. Then you are not Hungarian at all?"

"Only by adoption, but my husband was a Hungarian, I am a Hungarian Countess."

"I remember well that you were born in Aberhaven, all this does not affect the case. Your husband's son, my lord, is your brother, loving woman, and cannot understand a man's bitter and relentless hate. I am old to say. I do not like you to think me barbarous in my treatment of my son. I am not. I have been a morbid story, and that may have peopled me with fiends, but I am not a fiend. The unnatural son of a father who has no children, taunting down all softer emotions."

"Ah, do I not know that, my lord?" asked Miss Bing softly. "Have I not suffered all my life from one man's hatred?"

"You, Countess! Great Heaven! you?"

"Yes, I, my lord. I am a woman and an orphan possessing thrill running through her frame, suffering her pain.

"My life has been blighted; I have wept and cried out in my misery, and I have prayed and early years, and I have been as wretched as dead for many years can who lived, but for whom I would have died. I have had a man's hatred of another. Ah, do I not understand the bitterness of your heart, for I have had its curse has lain upon me all these years, and its shadow rests upon me still?"

"But, dear Lady Rothsmere, how can any man hate you? Your sweetness would disarm the fiend."

"The Scriptures say that 'the sins of the father shall be visited upon the children of the land, and my father's sins have been visited upon me. My husband's hate was the curse of my son's wife. I was a child of seventeen, innocent, thoughtless, and you, my dear lord, in my ignorance of the world, I loved him, and he was unworthy and ungenuine. He was the son of my father's enemy. But what did Romeo and Juliet care for the fend of the Montagues and Capulets? They loved, and they married, and I did the same."

"And you and my young lover, Ida Bruce, are the children of the enemies of the feudlines love."

"I did not love you, Lady Rothsmere, they would be barbarians, or worse," cried the Baron, angrily, yet earnestly. "I have known you but a short time, Countess, but a few short weeks, but I love you as I never expected to love any woman again. You are young, beautiful, and I am old enough to be your father, but I am not to you with a tenderness of which I had not dreamed myself capable. I am older than you, but I love you as a young heart. I yielded that to my dear wife who is now in heaven, but she raised the truest love reverently. "She is still in me while no other woman can ever be so to me. I am with the clinging devotion of my riper years, and I am certain that I could punish and fighting trail for an idolized child. Other men have sons, but I have not one. Countess, may I not be more than with greater love than that I bear you?"

"Don't!" she whispered, putting up her hand. "Don't speak so to me. You will be sorry—you will!"

"And why? You are not promised to be married."

"No, O no. But I shall never marry again."

"You are young to say that, thirty years of age, one does not lay aside all human feelings. You are not a nun, Countess. My Lady Rothsmere, I am a young man, and childless, loveless. Come to me. Be my daughter. Make sunshine in my lonely house. Let me have your smiles and your sunny eyes to greet me when I come. Let me have your noble companionship, the benefit of your bright, and sparkling intellect, and your good wisdom. I shall be a greater and a better man with your companionship. Lady Rothsmere, and I believe you with such rare devotion to your husband's memory that you will be a true friend. Come to me then, I implore you."

His stern face softened into a yearning tenderness, his grand eyes glowed with a great and tender love for her. He put out his arm as if to draw her nearer to him, but she shrank back from him, her blue eyes full of grief and a sort of terror.

"I appreciate your kindness, my lord," she said, in a faltering voice, "but it may not be. I cannot become your wife. I can never make sunshine in your lonely house. I do love you, but I cannot be your wife. Do not love—it may not be, dear Lord Waldemar."

The Baron stilled a group.

"I have permitted myself to hope," he murmured. "I have been foolish, idiotic, but I thought you liked me, Lady Rothsmere: I fancied you were pleased when I came near."

"I do like you, my lord," said the Hungarian Countess distractedly. "I like you, and I admire you. I love to talk with you; to be in your presence; to hear your voice, so speedy in Parliament; but I love you as a friend, as a father, as a dear friend. I have had only been so good as to give me a father like you."

"I wish you were my daughter," cried Lord Waldemar, with a fierce energy. "Since you will not be my wife, I wish you could be my daughter. But I have no son for whom I might beg you to be his mother. I will not go back to Vienna, or to Hungary, and forget that you are in Aberhaven. You will take no step without consulting me."

"My lord, this lovely evening Honor Glint is when we are seeking a suitable party your own grandchild. She is bright, spirited, loving, talented and noble. She will take the place you would fain give me, and her love will cause you to forget me."

The stern old Baron trembled, and hot tears drooped from his fiery eyes so unused to weeping.

"I shall never forget you," he said broken-ly. "I have been mad to think that you could be my wife. I am not worthy to be so. I will never more to love you. I will forget that I attended me through life," and his tones took a bitter, unfeeling tone, "and you will have a son, a frank, generous youth, proved false and treacherous, and unworthy the daughter of an enemy. My nephew—you know what he is. I ask now my last favor in existence. I shall go down to my grave lonely and forsaken."

"My lord, my dear friend," she cried, with them. Forgive me, but have you not told me that you have a son in your own house? Your nephew is not your son. I believe that you suffered him in the security to force his will. My lord, he will always. God metes out to the triangle of bitterness and sorrow. To the dreadful wo may for ourselves are titles, ever still, a thousand-fold."

"You do not understand, my lady," cried his lordship impatiently. "I have married a disgusting woman, the daughter of a man I despise, and I could not leave him. I am not a cowardly and English prejudices. Lady Rothsmere—"

"I am English born and bred."

"Yes? I did not think it."

"I was a governess in the family of Count Rothsmere," said the Countess, "for nearly two years before my husband's death, and he moulded to him by a mutual friend. His daughter, a young girl of 16, was the victim of a disease which was not painful, but which rendered her helpless as a child. I went to Count Rothsmere's in Hungary, and I went there to teach her English, and to read to her sometimes. I soon her brother's tutor, and we had many social intercourse. The father knew my history, and he gave me a home for his child, and gather over his daughter's bed and she faded day by day before our eyes. The Count loved and begged me to make him happy before she died. They were all alone in a great house in the wilderness, although I was not noble nor wealthy. I was a governess, and I was a Protestant. We were married a week before the daughter died. She died in my arms, and it was over her child's grave that I vowed that I never repented his marriage to me, and every day I thanked God that I had been a shelter and a refuge. You see, my lord, I can

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

NEW YORK LEDGER

ROBERT BONNER, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1871.

We always stop the LEDGER at the expiration of the time, or at the time for which it is paid, so that if you wish to continue it, it would be well to renew your subscriptions at least one week before the time is out.

Better Than Ever.

THE NEW YORK LEDGER
FOR THE NEW YEAR, 1872.

THE GREAT FAMILY PAPER.

Instructive and entertaining as the *Ledger* has been in the past, we hope and intend to make it still more instructive and entertaining in the future. We expect to improve upon it than heretofore, and our ambition to make the *Ledger* the best paper of the kind published in the world, is undiminished.

It is the aim of the *Ledger* to cultivate a taste for reading in the rising generation, and at the same time, by the character of its contents, to contribute constantly to their moral and intellectual improvement and growth.

An engine might as well be expected to write down what he would have for dinner every day for twelve months to come, as for us to attempt, at this time, a catalogue of all the good things that will be served before the readers of the *Ledger* in 1873. Our old subscribers will bear us witness that all the promises we have ever made have always been more than fulfilled. We never let slip an opportunity to obtain any really good and desirable thing. Expense and trouble never stand in our way. And in this respect, as it has been in the past, so it will be in the future.

The *Ledger* is particularly devoted to the interests and welfare of the family circle. A vast number of questions about lovers' quarrels, proposals, the best means of bringing about happiness, the best means of brightening the home of youthful married people, etc., are answered in the *Ledger*.

One great and guiding principle with us is to inculcate the sentiments of self-reliance and self-reliance, and thus to strengthen and render more manly the character of what are the coming form, to endure through all their days.

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It contains the purest, sweetest and most delightful stories, stirring adventures, and instructive biographical and historical sketches.

It has the most popular and reliable compared collection of scientific facts.

It has the most original and choicest clergymen of the religious world.

All our favorite old writers will continue to write for the *Ledger*; and we are also at work on the keen look-out for any new development of *real* rural genius.

OUR TERMS FOR 1873.—NOW IS THE TIME TO SUBSCRIBE.

Single copies, $7 per annum; four copies, $25, which is $6.25 a copy; eight copies, $50. The paper who sends us $50 for a club of eight copies, (a neat oil one time) will be entitled to a copy *free*. Postmasters and others who get up clubs, in their own towns, are allowed to retain twenty-five cents in $5.00. Subscriptions taken for less periods than one year. Canada subscribers must send twenty cents in addition to the subscription, to pay the American postage. When a draft or money-order can be procured, it should be sent by registered, as it will prevent the possibility of the loss of money by mail. The postage on the *Ledger* to all parts of the country is only twenty cents per year, or five cents a quarter, payable at the office where the paper is delivered.

☞ We employ no traveling agents. Address all communications to

ROBERT BONNER, Publisher,
Corner of William and Spruce streets, New York.

Be Kind to the Living.

It is all very well to give men fine funerals when they die, and to write long obituary notices proving them saints unexcanonized. It is a good thing to pause—as we do most all of us some day—for a little moment, to do honor to the dust and ashes yesterday a man. But we like to do this, can we not also give a little kindness to the living? Can we not be generous and just and forgiving to those who still have care to bear and hearts to throw with pain and anxiety?

But no: if a man is still living and does aught to offend us, and is not of our own party, we give him no mercy. We mock him, abuse him, caricature him, bear false witness against him, and wind up his funeral sermon off to do him justice, and to say, "Though we did not think alike on some points, he was on the whole a good man."

How many hearts might have been saved from breaking by a perusal of their obituary notices how many might have been comforted by an ante-mortem perusal of the verses on their tombstones! It is after he is dead we say of the man, "He was a brave and good," of the woman, "She was pure and pretty." Why, indeed, because, the innocents, the malicious whisper, the coarse caricaturists have no fire living, breathing, bleeding human bosoms. Any amount of tombstone praise and funeral panegyric that you like but would it harm us to be a little kinder to the living?

The Senate and Mr. Greeley.

A majority of the United States Senate refused to the friends of Mr. GREELEY an opportunity to deliver his eulogium upon him on the floor of the Senate Chamber.

Their action was inhibitional, narrow, and contemptible. In only injures those who participated in it, however. It had no effect to prevent the people from mourning the great champion of popular rights.

Senators like General CAMERON, distinguished as he is for his generosity of character, to perform so mean a part as to vote a parliamentary trick, to prevent deserved honors to be paid. In the Senate that the State of New York had, on the floor of the Senate, as we are informed, a native son worthy of prompting a less ignoble Senator to the unworthy movement?

—Now is the time for our readers to renew their subscriptions, as we always stop sending the *Ledger* to our subscribers at the expiration of the year, or the time for which it is paid. In this way no back debts ever accumulate against us—a thing we like to avoid. Many do not renew at the year because we are afraid to trust our subscribers, but because that is the rule we have adopted, and it has proved far more satisfactory than any other we could devise.

The Death of a Great Journalist.

HORACE GREELEY died a few minutes before seven o'clock on the evening of November 29th, 1872—the day after Thanksgiving. He was sixty-one years old—the same age as FATHER TIME at the time when he died.

The funeral of Mr. GREELEY took place on the fourth day of December. Without exception, we never saw the remains of any other person followed to the grave by so large a procession.

Among the mourners were the President of the United States, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and very many other distinguished public and private citizens.

Mr. GREELEY possessed a natural constitution of wonderful vitality, and of unbounded power of endurance. His death was premature for a man of such uncommon physique and of his strictly temperate habits, and was undoubtedly caused by overwork.

Few men have had so many to mourn their decease with unaffected grief. He was generally regarded as pre-eminently the friend of the people.

The most touching circumstance connected with the death of Mr. GREELEY is the fact that the finishing blow to his life was dealt what, combined with proudest causes, finally broke him down past recovery, was incessant and sleepless thinking at the bedside of his dying wife, who preceded him to the tomb only about one week.

The grief of a nation follows him to the grave. The affection of his wide circle of friends will preserve and keep green his memory.

Mr. GREELEY was a prolific writer, and most popular work—"Recollections of a Busy Life"—being his autobiography—was written originally and exclusively for the New York *Ledger*.

Besides this, Mr. GREELEY contributed many occasional articles to our columns.

We respected and admired him as we the end of his days, few men have performed so large an amount of good work.

Shocking—An End to Runaways.

We have ceased to be shocked at the doings of electricity. We are not even surprised. It does things as the sun does, it shines in the light; it swims the seas, and traverses continents with equal ease. We are astonished only when we first heard its infantile peepings and groanings. It has done many wonderful things, and its capacity is beyond finite measurement. Here is a Providence, R. I., inventor who has invented a machine for stopping runaway horses instantly. "Electricity, at the control of the driver, is the means employed." The horse is violently shocked, and so much surprised that he stops, and will not go on. It is absolute that he would.

What a blessing such promises to be! We see in it untold advantages.

The slugging match will no chance for "a little more sleep, and a little more slumber," with one of these machines attached to the seat post. Even the "fast horse" will be a modules halt in their performances, and incontinently disappear.

The debtor will be immediately checked; the defaulter cashier will be put to the end of necessity or delay of hunting up an officer of the law.

Elopements will be impossible; and young men and maidens will not be in such danger of making matrimonial mistakes in their choices. It is the patient brake for which we have been waiting so long. It will relieve society from running down hill at break-neck speed.

No more fractious colts, or runaway horses; no more accessions from virtue, or accessions to vice. Even the gamblers will stand aghast, shocked to her volcanic centre, and the finest race horses in the land will become docile as lambs.

The "gift of gab" distinguishes this generation but not to the full. Electricity will supply the words that will never echo to the frantic "whoa!" of disappointed drivers, or undertake possession of our streets when this newly-invented, back-action-electrical brake is brought into use.

President Grant and the Union League Association Decorate Horace Greeley's Grave.

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The Union League, on the other hand—of which Mr. GREELEY was long a leading and honored member—showed an absolute want of decency, and a disregard for the common proprieties of the occasion, in giving to Mr. WASHBURNE, the American Minister to France, a special train to attend the funeral. *Every day of the funeral.* Mr. WASHBURNE'S relations of all to Mr. GREELEY are such as have been remembered by him sufficiently to cause him to decline the courtesy offered him.

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The Old and the New—Which?

The time was when homicides were roasted alive, or boiled in oil; when coiners were hanged, drawn and quartered, and their ghastly fragments set up as conspicuous points to terrify evil-doers; when thieves and forgers were mangled by the arms and scores, with no eye to pity, and no arm to save them. Now-a-days, the worst criminal has an ample show for his life. He is defended by able counsel; he is effect selects his own jury; if any should be believed to have been made by the Court on the trial, a writ of error is granted him, and if that miscarriages, that a higher Court may review the case, and see if justice has been administered according to law. The ancient mode of treating criminals was barbarous in the extreme. But are we not in danger, on the other hand, of running our modern leniency to them into as great an extreme? We think so.

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LITERARY WASTES.

BY HENRY WARD BEECHER.

To *read and write* is the foundation of literary education. But to write is not simply the faculty of expressing words with a quill. It is the ability to give a full expression to one's thoughts and feelings. We have already spoken of this. It is an education to be sought in every one, if for no other reason, for the benefit that is derived from it to one's own self, and without regard to the use which the United States, the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States, and very many other distinguished public and private citizens.

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THREE LOVES.

BY A SCHOOL FROM CASTRE.

BY JOHN G. SAXE.

I have known various loves of women: one
Gave all her soul, and that was first and last
Her only sigh, and ever seemed a part
Love's blandishments, as if his lightest act
Were but the fond fulfillment of her own.
Whatever smiles and kisses could impart
To pleasure me; withholding little, save
What else, alas! had not—to-day is past!
Poor, dear dead Bowers!—One wish no rest in
And one he breast of Heaven's overarching sky,
No marvel briefly they survived their birth;
Such love is true-love ever, and looks on
Beyond the tomb!—whose soul and sense unite
In Love's Elysium, and forever delight.

A LUCKY COUNTERFEIT

BY JUDGE CLARK.

In the fall of ——, I had occasion to make a trip on horseback through a remote Western State, carrying with me a considerable sum of money. On the way, my horse sickened and died, and finding it impossible immediately to procure another, I resolved, for the present, to continue my journey on foot.

Having proceeded thus for several days, I stopped one evening at a settler's cabin, and solicited lodgings for the night—a request which was readily granted.

My host was a goodly specimen of the backwoodsman. His ingenuous countenance and frank, off-hand manner made it impossible long to remain a stranger in his company. He was a bachelor, living alone, as I soon understand, but, added with a wink and a laugh, that amid the cares of pioneer life he had not quite forgotten "the girl he had left behind him." He said that he expected her out in the course of a month or two, I might find it worth my while to remain with him until then. I believe he had had a hard time of it, poor fellow, he said, but thanks to health, energy, and perseverance, he was now in a fair way of being a competence at last. It was only that day he had received a thousand dollars in cash, the fruit of years of toil and self-denial. Evidently unaccustomed to such a luxury, he grew quite communicative.

"And now, in two days," he continued, "I shall set out to meet Mary Collins, and glad enough they'll be to see me at home, I'll be bound. I've been away from them for more than three years. I left home. And I don't mind telling you, though I'm not in the habit of generally doing so, I expect to come back alone—that is, if Hattie hasn't changed her mind. Hattie was a good reason to believe she hasn't, if I have been away from it all. Hattie was a very old bachelor at thirty, nor a girl an old maid at twenty-one."

All this, and more, my entertainer rattled off in the course of the evening.

I put the price at $7 at length he inquired, in a tone indicative of apology for having to ask the question, what I charged for lodging.

"You will find it a longsome journey afoot," said he, when I had answered his question, "and I explained my reason for travelling so at all. Now, I've got a horse you may as well borrow, some the first chance that offered."

"Why, I'll tell you," replied Mr. Burch. "I've been a-thinking that I'd like to ride, and I'll be glad to lend you the horse."

I was glad to accept the offer, and, as it was yet daylight, we repaired to a log stable not far from Mr. Burch leading the way.

I was offered the pick of three horses, for all of which Mr. Burch declared he had at little time as in a Western settler's view. Considering the long journey before me, my selection a bargain was soon made, whereupon Mr. Burch proposed that we should have a race. I agreed to the proposal, and Mr. Burch fortunately had on hand.

I told the price stipulated, and expressing an intention to make an early start next morning, got to bed. Mr. Burch was already considerably delayed. I put everything in readiness, and proffered payment for the night's accommodation, which Mr. Burch declined to take. I was glad of it, for I thought he might it a role never to refuse shelter to a traveller.

On reaching the cabin, I was requested to "help myself" to what I found in it, in the days, was scarce and dear. I made a repast of venison and johnny-cake, on which we supped in prisons, but which better appetite.

After supper and a sociable chat of some length, Mr. Burch proposed that we should have final. His stipulation was agreed to, and we lay down to bed, he on my own disposal. Thanking him for his hospitality, and saying a word or two before at once, I was conducted to my sleeping apartment.

The house was what is called a "one pen cabin," one of the wings of which was allotted to me for my sleeping room. Before I left me a candle at the door, which was without other furnishing than a wooden latch.

"We've no need of locks here," he said; "we're all honest folks here, and I'm not afeared with either thieves or pickpockets."

I bade him good night, and he closed the door behind him.

I was soon asleep, and dreamed of the weary, which, if not as peaceful, is often at least as sound as that of the just.

I got up at early dawn, and not wishing to disturb the family, I dressed myself and passed lightly through the passage between the cabins, and made my way to the stable.

My horse had already made a good feed off the corn in the crib, and I had no difficulty in saddling and bridling him. I led him out, and handful of oats which I threw into the manger, I walked round to the front door.

I was well pleased with my purchase, a tame travelling companion I should have regretted by his late owner, and late in the afternoon was pushing ahead at a brisk trot, as I heard a clattering of hoofs behind me.

I looked round, and saw Mr. Burch coming about with a start.

"Hallo!" he exclaimed, "what's the matter?"

"Nothing," replied the other, as he reined his horse.

"Hallo!" he repeated, "or I'll let daylight through you!"

Yielding to the summons, which it would have been madness to disobey, I was in a trice surrounded by a dozen armed men.

"What is the meaning of this?" I demanded.

"Cool question that!" sneered the leader of the party.

"Why, you've stolen my horse, that's all."

"Sartinly; and prolongs you mean to tell us that Tom Burch has given you leave to take his horse?"

"Certainly, and prolongs you mean to tell us that you've been and gone and stole his money and his house robbed, and that you didn't, and that Tom Burch isn't lay in his own blood?"

In vain I protested my innocence. In vain I insisted and reiterated the exact truth. Innocence never looked guiltier, nor truth more like falsehood, than they then did, enforced by circumstances so damning.

"You'd better save your little allowance of breath for prayin' instead of lyin'," was all the answer I got.

A rope was produced with a ready-made noose at the end of it, but no one seemed willing to adjust it. The hangman's office, however necessary, is not one of honor, and few aspire to it.

"Hello! you, Nat. Gates," spoke up a victorious looking man, who till now had kept in the background, "do up this yer job—you've done enough o' that afore—and I'll give you five dollars."

"Done her cut!" said an ill-favored individual, with a bloated, sottish face.

"Wait till the work's done," said the other. "Have it certainly in advance," persisted Nat.

With some reluctance a five-dollar note was produced and handed over. Gates held it up to the light, and was examining it suspiciously, when a stern, intelligent looking man took it from his hand, remarking as he did so:

"Where did that note come from?" he inquired of the last speaker.

"Dick Bryan give it to me just now," said Gates, "an' I'm blowed if I believe it's good. It's mighty like a counterfeit, I'm thinkin'."

The Colonel took the note, and turning it over, glanced at the back.

"Why this note is your possession?" he inquired in the same cutting, quick voice.

The person addressed turned pale, but made no answer.

"Search him," said the Colonel.

The search was instituted, as if preparing for flight, a dozen bank-notes of small size, and from his pocket was speedily drawn a roll of bank-notes.

"Let me see it," said the Colonel.

The roll was handed to him, and he examined it hastily.

"It was counterfeiting a terrible mistake, gentlemen," he added. "This roll contains the identical thousand dollars received from me yesterday by our murdered neighbor, and which I saw him put in his pocket-book. Search him; he had pistols from under secret, and which, at the same time, he asked me to lend him. Search him, I say, for the pocket-book pronounced it counterfeit, and Burch, in my absence, must have spied upon it, and hoping to return it to the person from whom he lent revolvers, but how came you by this horse, sir?" said the Colonel, with a keen glance at me, "and what is your business?"

I repeated the statement I had already made.

"Then you consider the money you paid?" he asked.

"Not a minutely.

"That money should either be in Byron's possession or that of the murderer," said the Colonel.

Further search of Bryon failed to discover it; but on reaching the murdered man's house, it was found in the bed, where it had been concealed by the assassin. From the description I had given, was found in a drawer in the kitchen. The stranger has been committed to gain possession of the larger sum of money. Burch was buried. Bute was probably kept in a place by itself.

I was detained as one to the penalty corpse of his victim, the new prisoner's coarsings confirmed my story in all its details, to conclusion, and begged for mercy.

"Mercy!" said the man pronounced sadly now," said he.

Another vote was taken, and another conversation ensued, which ended in the guilt not still piteously pleading for his life. For a moment I thought of the wife and child of the wretched man, and of the shame about him, belated by many hands pulling at once, and in a moment more he was dead. In a trice, a noose at the other end encircling the culprit's neck.

It was a horrible and disgusting sight. The wretched man struggled for a few minutes in the swaying body, the quivering limbs—I could not look upon them—and then all was still and motionless. His struggles were at an end, and sad withal, as I thought of the sudden and terrible end contrasted with the bright, bright, a joyous meeting with the expected wife and lover, lifting so dreadful was in store.

A British Husband's Vengeance.

A husband's vengeance is terrible in England, becoming jealous of the attentions of a neighbor to his wife, resolved to wreak his vengeance on the man. He was a pleasant sing how to avenge himself, the wife and husband consented to go on the same train of cars to an adjacent town on the same day, and to be in the same compartment. It was a professional pugilist, awaited the return of the husband at a certain station, and the observation near the railroad station. Just in the dusk of evening the neighbor returned, and as did the train was about to start, and as it drew from the station, the husband and the pugilist had the compartment to themselves. In the next spot, the husband gave the signal, and the pugilist fell upon him. The fight was a fierce one, and ended in the death of his assailant. The husband was taken in custody and held to bail for $5,000. The pugilist had a hundred thousand dollars—but the pugilist could not be found. As the matter was hushed up in high social connections, the affair has created no sensation, and the husband in the trial is looked forward to with intense expectation.

This is the best number of the Ledger for the year 1872. It will be better for 1873 and 1874.

Thieves "of Property and Standing."

When DANIEL WEBSTER wanted to pay what he considered a solid compliment to any of his constituents, he called them "men of property and standing." Criminal lawyers have latterly adopted the expression in referring to their clients. "If your Honor please, the prisoner is a man of property and standing," exclaims Counsellor Cheatham, pointing to the prisoner at the bar. "Well, he has stolen a few hundred thousand dollars from the widow and orphan, but he has their money.

Hence the defaulters who rob banks, insurance companies, railroad companies and trust companies, and run away to Canada, are always defended by a man of property and standing, except in the criminal docket, is a disgrace to society.

A Good Law.

According to Act of Congress, any Judge of the United States Court on arriving at the age of seventy, provided he shall have been a Judge ten years, may resign his office and continue to draw his salary during the rest of his life. The first United States Judge to resign under this law is Judge NELSON, of this State, who recently retired to private life, after having been on the Supreme Court Bench twenty-seven years. We say this is a good law, for it is a shame that the Judge is a defendant in a case of fraud before a fair support when he becomes incapacited by age.

[From the DE PAGE County (Iowa) Herald.]

We will say what every one knows to be a truth, that the *Ledger* is the best publication in the United States. When we speak this, we but echo the sentiments of the world at large. All the newspapers of the land bestrain not in praising its moral and instructive tone.

GOOD KRIS KRINGLE.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.
BY CLARA DUNN.

The wind blows up through the avenues,
And the streets are white with snow,
And the tinkling flakes in a silvery shower
Out from the clouds do flow.
Jingle, jingle,
Jingle, jingle,
Hark to the bells of old Kris Kringle!

The night is near, but no star is seen,
And the hot noon hides her face,
And a voice is heard muttering coarse and mean
Muttering in every place.
Jingle, jingle,
Jingle, jingle,
Hark to the winds as they loudly wrangle!

The lights burn bright in many a room,
And the table is never empty,
And a flood of joy and love and tender free
Is breathed by the mistletoe's queen.
Jingle, jingle,
Jingle, jingle,
Where are the bells of old Kris Kringle?

Little ones sleep in their beds at night,
And their dreams are far from two,
And they wonder if Santa Claus is right,
As they wonder for mind through.
Jingle, jingle,
Jingle, jingle,
Sweetest of voices and harp-notes mingle.

The morn has come, and the dreamers arise
Most anxiously from their beds,
For the stockings stuffed that hung on the
heads,
Have been all night in their heads.
Jingle, jingle,
Jingle, jingle,
Hurrah for the coming of old Kris Kringle!

A FATAL INHERITANCE.

BY ELIZA A. DUPUY,
AUTHOR OF THE "CAUL QUEEN," "THE "WHITE HERON," THE "RIVAL SISTERS," ETC.

PART I.

CHAPTER VII.
AN INIQUITOUS WILL.

Crimin took the master of Layton back to his house, and from there made every effort to stay the measures he was determined to take in pursuit of fugitive wife. But for once the cleverness of Crimin proved more than a match for all he was up to.

A note was sent to a magistrate living a few miles distant, and a warrant procured for searching the house of Dr. Bland for the purpose of regaining possession of the child. At the same time a messenger was dispatched to the nearest railroad station, with orders to stop Mrs. Layton and bring back the whole party. A boat was also manned and sent in search of them on the river, but Crimin himself, with his own carriage, two officers, and a handsome reward for the first discovery of the fugitives, was the one most likely to be successful.

Layton passed the day in wandering to and fro about the house, like a spirit doomed for ever to unrest. At intervals his memory, though the brandy he imbibed seemed to brighten the place of dulling the mind, as it usually did after a certain phase of outbreak-ing, was entirely obliterated.

Crimin watched him constantly, and at intervals attempted to speak with him, and ascertain the details of the horrible scene, usually broken by a volley of bitter imprecations against his wife, but he was as much baffled as ever, and were now far away from his clutches.

Strange as it may seem to the many, with his debased personal habits, possessed indomitable pride of family and of authority. He had reigned as an autocrat over his dependents, and his will he only regarded as his chief slave, whose duty it was to accept such treatment as he chose to give her, without complaint or rebellion.

She had fled from him, and the world would know that Layton of Layton had been defied by a woman. Such a thing was not to be borne by his pride, and in the days and nights that passed that day, he was ready to do anything that would enable him to avenge himself upon her in so fearful a manner as to make her life one long dread for the safety of the child she had taken from him.

His soul was turned to bitterness against both mother and daughter, and he was maddening in his mind a plan by which he believed the most exquisite torture could be inflicted on the woman, whose heart never had arranged up in the well-being of her child.

The hours passed on. When dinner was served he ate in sullen silence, repelling every effort of Crimin to draw him into conversation, and regarding him at times with a sinister expression which was incomprehensible to the scheming person.

When the men sent to Dr. Bland's came back to report their failure, Layton listened to the story with a grim smile, and seemed to be but little to them. It was not necessary that when the business came back with the information that a lady, child, and servant, accompanied by Philip Bland, had embarked at the Marine Parade before they could reach the landing. He only said:

"They have gone as far as Charleston to take the steamer for Baltimore. It may not be too late to send a telegram to stop my lady child still she surrenders the child. Then she may go where she likes, for I shall feel that I have fairly discharged my obligations to have a detective on the track, and that my wife could not elude the vigilance of the police."

Crimin ventured to say:

"I should not attempt to interfere with her, Ned? The child would only be a burden to her, and if separated from her mother she would probably fret herself sick. You would be sure to have help thrown in your hapless lot."

"I do not wish any advice from you, James Crimin," said Layton, in tones that were unusually calm. "You have gone over to the enemy, I am plainly to see, and shall be guided in this matter by no hypocritical counsellor. If you had only played a part in this morning, we could have together frustrated the fiendish plan to keep the child to me. You are trying to baffle me in some way, and for purposes of your own, but I will prove more than a match for you yet."

Crimin shrugged his shoulders, and quietly said:

"It is no concern of mine. There is no reason why I should care particularly about the safety of the child, and I am willing to be chancellor enough on my part to refuse to lend a baby like that from the arms of her mother."

"The outrage against Alice will be no greater to her than the one she has been guilty of toward me, in abstaining my daughter from her legal home and taking her from my protection. I shall commit it, at all hazards, and I shall exercise my right to the possession of Lucia."

The dispatches were written and sent to the nearest telegraphic station, and when Layton sent a messenger with a note to the lawyer who managed his affairs, he was requesting him to ride over to Layton the following day for the purpose of making his will.

He looked, indeed, as if it was time that his worldly affairs were settled, for the purple flush had faded from his face, and a pallor of sickness had taken its place, which gave him a most unnatural and ghastly appearance. His eyes looked like balls of living fire, as they rolled restlessly from side to side, and the nervous twitching of his muscles showed that but little more was wanting to complete the wreck this man had wantonly made of physical health and mental power.

He paced the floor of his apartment the greater part of the night, locking the doors against all intruders, and stubbornly refusing to permit his cousin to remain near him. He vaguely felt that Crimin exerted over him some strange power, which, in his pressure, he could not resist, and resolute to carry out the vindictive purpose he had matured in his own mind, he banished the man he believed to be acting in the interests of his wife.

Toward morning he threw himself upon the bed, where he slept only for many hours, and early next morning the unusual amount of exercise he had taken,

When he awakened he ordered to be served his own servant ventured to knock at his door, but as no answer was returned, he went in search of Crimin, to know if he thought it advisable to use other means to arouse his master.

THE MAKING OF THE WILL.

tended scrupulously to the business pledged to him, and Crimin was left in charge of the employees and grim, fierce Layton, who, to ourselves then that of any other client, for his belligerent disposition brought him into ever-recurring difficulties with his neighbors, and Barton's help was always needed to extricate him from them.

Yet the little man had a nervous dread of his blustering client, and his heart sank within him as he thought of the scene that must ensue between the lawyer and master, under the peculiar circumstances.

He had already been widely known that Mrs. Layton had taken her child and gone, whither no one could exactly say, and that she had left her husband, and refused to return to live with him, which was accepted fact. Now Mr. Barton cherished a great admiration for Alice, and he was not at all surprised at her action, but he felt the reverse of glad that it fell to his lot to be summoned to the side of her husband in consequence of some great wrong against her.

Crimin met him with the information that his client was still sleeping, and he would have some sway under the circumstances of possessing him elsewhere; but just as he was preparing to do so, the door of Layton's room opened, and he walked into the hall where the two men were standing, and accosted Barton:

"I hope you were not thinking of going away again without seeing me, Barton, for I had written to you myself to be on hand to-day, and I am sorry that my servant's stupidity was to take you away from the breakfast table. It's much time, or near it, and I have overslept myself confoundedly. It don't matter though. Only half the day is gone, and you can finish up what I want done before night."

"Certainly, certainly, Mr. Layton. I am always at your service, you know," said the little man, nervously, and not exactly sure he would ride over to the Oakridge place while the sun was shining, "but I have left my office lady in the day's work."

"So-o, you expect to kill two birds with one stone, then, and accomplish more than I do, you?" asked Layton, with a sneer. "When I send for those I employ and pay handsomely, I expect them to put aside other people's affairs, and attend to mine. That is what you are for, you Mr. Barton, that you did not go to Oakridge, for if I had not been there, you and servant, so-called, would have embarked in the steamer."

"Really, Mr. Layton, you are using very strange tone to me; but I can overlook it in consideration of—of what has been the joy you are in, and which I suppose you wish to consult me about."

"*I* am in no trouble," thundered Layton, his leaden face flushing deeply. "I am as free as a butterfly this morning, and as happy as the day is long, and you, Barton, have got rid of the silliness I hung around my neck when I married a fool. I am free as the wildest savage to take her and keep with her. I'm glad she's gone; but I mean to punish her all the same by making it take me all my wealth when I ordered her to leave my house, and I've sent for you to draw up the deed."

The timid little man shrank within himself, and his usual shrewdness of perception deserted before him, but he managed to say:

"I—of course I am here to serve you, Mr. Layton; but will it not be well that you consult with your friends, and—and—and—and naturally would allow me to prepare for writing so important a document as a will when you are in a calmer frame of mind?"

"I send for you, sir, to do me a service, not to offer advice, and you will do as I order you to do-one," said Layton, in a freezing tone. "I am the best judge of my own affairs, and will shall be made to-day, while I have sense and judgment to see that it is properly drawn up, quibble that the law can take hold of. When I am dead, or out of my mind, I will leave it to the law, but on this day I am in my right mind to a degree that, and yonderstands the Mephistopheles who would sell my soul for gold to secure and subserves, even if I were inclined to do so."

He pointed mockingly at Crimin, whose face flushed as he said hastily and low:

"Really, Ned, if you become so personal, I shall be obliged to withdraw from your house with the same you to your own devices. There is no need for such language to me, and I will not submit to it."

"There—there, that will do," broke in Layton. "It is too late now to withdraw. I want you, as you know well enough, or you would not be standing there, to draw up what is almost told, the web nearly spun, and the weird sisters are sharpening their scissors to clip the threads. So be it. I have lived a long life, and it is to be a brief one, and after to-day I give myself up to such mad pleasure as will crowd into a few months and days and decades sympathy with his wildest follies of a lifetime."

The laugh that rang out was so forced, so hollow, so evidently the offspring of reckless despair, that even Crimin shuddered, and asked himself if this was indeed his work. The little lawyer felt as if the blood in his veins were chilling into ice, and he shrank more than ever from the formidable task that he had undertaken to perform.

Layton called loudly for a servant, and when one came, ordered that the table in the present and writing materials be set in such a possible to drink it, when he was ready to call for it.

"I must have something to stimulate me," he said, "and with what I have in hand coffee will be the safest tipple. I must have no false brain, that can keep my nerves and keep me up to the mark. Come into the dining-room, Barton, and I will dictate to you my instructions, and you can draw up the deed before things in more unobtrusive refreshments."

"Thanks—I—I—no, no!" replied Barton, who felt as if something was necessary to restrain him from the crime he feared awaited him; he accepted a very modest portion of his client's hand, and he was required to serve him most nearly fill his goblet, and after adding a little sugar and water, he drank it off without stopping. Layton poured into it, laugh when he saw Barton's amazed face, and said:

"That is nothing; you ought to be present when Crimin and I are going it strong. Strong waters don't hurt him, curses hurt but little, and we are doing for fast company."

"Then why, in Heaven's name, don't you dismiss him, and enjoy your company alone?" You are not yet so far gone but you could do that, and I will help you."

"Ta-ta, ta-ta! Don't be spoonsy, little man. We have a little game on hand between us, and is no use to throw away the dice in the decree of fate any more than Belshazzar could. I don't want to be alone. I have kinder a mania for company. Only half the day is gone, and you can finish up what I want done before night."

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"Let him sleep, by all means, John," was the half-breed reply. "It is the best thing he can do in his present state."

"Perhaps sir, master may be dead. He looked uncommon bad last night, an' he didn't cuss half as much as I'm used to, when I was in to ax if he wanted me to help him undress himself. He would take none of his close off, an' he was tramplin' 'roun' in thar boots all night."

"No, you I heard him, for I could not sleep much myself. If you'll listen at the window you'll hear if he is awake enough to wake any mortal creature except a drunken log. Let me answer you, for I am not yet so drunk to leave him to take his rampage. Tell the cook to send up my breakfast, and keep something nice and hot for her master when he wakes."

John vanished, glad to be relieved of the responsibility of arousing the sleeper, and as long continued were Layton's slumbers, that Crimin himself began to fear that he had taken something to prolong them till they ended in that last sleep which knows no awakening.

But at eight o'clock Mr. Barton, the lawyer, arrived. He was a small, timid-looking man, with deep-set eyes of a pale blue color, sandy hair and beard, and a nervous indecision of manner, which was increased this morning by the prospect of an interview with Mr. Layton.

Barton was a competent lawyer, and attended scrupulously to the business pledged to him, and Crimin was left in charge of the employees and grim, fierce Layton, who, to ourselves then that of any other client, for his belligerent disposition brought him into ever-recurring difficulties with his neighbors, and Barton's help was always needed to extricate him from them.

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mark me, shall turn me from my purpose. I will make a will now that will cut off from all participation in my property for many years to come, and when I am dead, I will leave the sum of five hundred dollars annually to be paid over to them."

"But—but, according to common law, Mr. Layton, your wife is entitled to one-third of your estate. You can make no will that will take that from her, if she chooses to contend for her rights."

"She woman will not contend, for she is too fond of her ease and pleasure, and I will see I am going to make bravely before the courts, and its singular provisions brushed over the whole land, as they would scarcely be when they became known."

"Good God! Mr. Layton, what do you intend to do then?" asked Barton, becoming more and more bewildered under the influence of the inflamed eyes men fiercely upon him.

"Not what you think, you little sir, on a which is subdued and impressive, and in so doing rubbed her of her incontinent. Layton, striking his hand so violently on the table that one of the pretty cups fell over and broke in pieces.

He looked at the fragments savagely, and then said:

"If I could crush her as easily as I have destroyed that thing, I would do it without remorse. She has made me the talk and by-word of the whole town. I never held up my head again after it is known that Layton of Layton had been defied by a woman. There is nothing left for me now but to drink myself into a drunkard's grave as soon as I can."

He dropped his face on his hands, and there was a long silence, for the lawyer was too much appalled by his violence to utter a word of consolation.

At length Layton looked up and, with subdued manner, said:

"I spoke of disinheriting my child, but I do not mean it. I will not be so unjust to her as to punish her for the sins of her mother. I will compel her mother to part from her—I will have my child, and see if there is a law in the document I shall detect it. I have been a fool, Barton, but I have never practiced it. Write down the usual formula, and then I will tell you on what terms I bequeath my fortune to the child."

Barton did as he was requested obeyed, and then Layton said:

"That is well; and now comes the gist of the matter. To my daughter, Lucia Layton, I give my undivided estate, provided she is not married before she attains her eighteenth years. If she dies after her majority, without children of her own to inherit, the whole property shall go to certain charities I shall hereafter name. If she dies before she attains her eighteenth year, my entire fortune goes to the charities I shall name.

He pen dropped from the hand of the lawyer, and he suspiringly said:

"But, Mr. Layton, you are suffering a tribe of half a million to your cousin to put your own flesh and blood to the most cruel deprivation of this magnificent estate. Have you considered the matter well? Is your heart in this, and will you be easy enough in your conscience?"

Layton serenely replied:

"I have considered the matter well, and my conscience is easy. That is why I have made such unscrupulous man. That is why I have made such unscrupulous man. Alice knows him as well as I do, and she will be foolish to let her child from her, or live in mortal terror of him. That is my revenge for her desertion, and I will carry it out to the bitter end."

"But, Mr. Layton, have you no love for little Lucia yourself? Suppose that she should die before she is of age? Do you think—think what danger to her you may be bringing about? Do you not—not—not—

into a stretch of woodland, and wound over hill and hollow in picturesque confusion, a narrow creek fringed with willows rippled over its rocky bed, over which a fanciful bridge was thrown. Ascending a long hill beyond it, their eyes came upon a wide stretch of moorland on which sheep were grazing. At the farthest edge of this gleamed the white buildings which inclosed the lawn that lay in front of Snowden Hall.

The house itself was entirely hidden from view by shrubbery, and only glimpses of its gray walls and stately entrance could be obtained through the long avenue of elms through which it was approached.

Every nook and kooky dell was familiar to Alice, and heavy as her heart was, it touched more than once with glad recognition of the places in which she had played in childhood days.

Celia's arm was nearly well, though her hand was still useless to her, and she sprang to before her nurse, gathering the wild flowers that loosened from the road, declaring that she was going to make a "totsy for dauna."

Mr. Snowden had never seen the child, for Alice had never been taken back to her native home since her marriage, and she now thought with a swelling heart how she would find but a cold welcome beneath its roof, such as it had received on her wedding day.

She went around to a side gate opening on a pathway through the shrubbery, and followed by Casey, who had now taken the child in her arms, drew near the house.

It was that indescribable air of desolation and stillness which falls on a house in which there is sickness almost unto death. Everything around was in scrupulous order; no dead leaves were allowed to lie on the ground, no aspiring shrub to intrude on the symmetry of the trees, but Alice always remembered it since the place had been under the supervision of her step-mother.

Mrs. Snowden was the ruling spirit of that house, for the quiet and rather passive man she had married had gradually sunk into a mere cipher beneath her active sway. She it was who had arranged the interior of the house, and the only room that was better than a hotel bedroom and plenty of money were all a woman need to secure her happiness.

As Alice ascended the steps leading to the latter portion in front of the house, a small, weather-beaten maid, with a red face and brisk manner, came bustling out. He stopped, and dropping a courtesy, looked at Alice with a keen shake of her head, and said:

"Bless my soul! where on the earth did you spring from? How did you hear, child? I wanted a letter or a telegram sent to you, but Mrs. Snowden said it was needless, and that something was decided. If anything fatal happened, you couldn't get here in time, and if it didn't, you could be written to when the danger was passed. I was going to write on you myself to-night, to tell you that your father was very low, and that it was all for the better that you and he were to be laid in peace."

He talked fast and excitedly, and when he paused for breath, Alice said, with a faint smile:

"Thank you for relieving my fears concerning my father, Dr. Preston. I—I—I thought he was ill till I heard it at the depot. How I got here I will tell you another time, but before long, and if nurse thinks me to be of course I have taken. I hope that you will stand my friend for the sake of old times, and tell me plain nothing new, but as one of my best friends, you shall, in time, know why."

"Why, God bless my soul! you don't mean—There, child, I'll wait. I shall not push you on any unseemly now. And this little boy and girl, they are yours, I suppose? Well, I declare, they're pretty! Casey! You are looking as bright as a porter button, and glad enough to get back to the old place, I have swear!

"Deed I is, Doctor, an' that's the truth."

The sound of voices brought to the door a small, fair woman, with delicate features, pale gray eyes with a slight auburn tinge in them, and a face which, in spite of its pallor, would attract one. Her figure was white, hand, and cold, and her dress the perfection of neatness, the compact little air from head and wisdom looked as precise and unrumpled as if their had been just put on, yet she had been all day in the invalid's room. The expression that came into Mrs. Snowden's face when she saw Alice, was one she now, she was one of those women who are incapable of any kind of emotion, though she was by no means insensible to the influence of beauty. With her, conscience, she came forward, took the hand of her step-daughter, and lightly touched her cheek to her forehead. In a cold, calm tone, she said:

"You is a sad time to make your first visit to your old home, Alice. Where is Mr. Layton? I suppose he is with you, of course."

"He is not with me," said Alice, panting slightly, for her heart sank down, and she felt least at this cold greeting. "Mr. Weston is in New York, and I have not seen him, nor he me, with me, nor ever likely to claim me again. I have run away from him."

She went out into, and she looked from one face to the other to see how this abrupt announcement was received. Dr. Preston's was full of compassion, but that of her step-mother contracted into a more repellent and her singular eyes emitted a fiery gleam as she grimly said:

"You were always impulsive and hard to deal with, but now I suppose you have learned to control your passions, and to be ashamed of going against your husband. But this is no time nor place to discuss your affairs. Come in, and at a later hour I will hear what excuses you can bring forward for deserting your home, and giving up the brilliant position I took such pains to secure for you."

Before obeying this mandate, uttered as if her step-daughter was still under her control, Alice seized the hand of Dr. Preston, and holding it between hers, said, both low, excitedly and:

"You will believe in me, dear Doctor? You know that I would never have left my husband's side if I had not been driven to it by him. You will believe that, and I shall not care much for her."

Mrs. Snowden had gone into the house again without noticing either the child or nurse, and she was now in the shadow of the hall, awaiting her unwelcome guest. Dr. Preston hastily replied to the impassioned appeal of Alice:

"I know you could not do anything wrong, and I am sure you were the unconscious victim of children, and the gentlest of maidens. I will stand by you, child, and I will be your friend and enemy of Mr. Snowden. Keep fair with her if you can. And now I will leave, and God bless you."

"Stop one moment, and tell me if I can see my father at once? Will my presence excite him too much?"

"It will be an inexpressible comfort to him, my child, and I think you were born only a little while ago. But you must be careful about telling him of your troubles; he has enough of his own just now. I must go now, but I will have a good talk with you to-morrow."

He hastened away, and Alice, followed by Casey, entered the hall, its polished walls gleaming white and cold as marble, and the dark mahogany of the doors and staircase showed the keen eyes of the mistress. Mrs. Snowden led the way into her special sitting-room, which had the same air of chilly order which seemed to be the atmosphere of the house. Her work-stand stood on one side of the fireplace, her writing-desk on the other, but both were scrupulously neat, and every chair was ranged with mathematical precision against the walls.

Alice looked at all this, and thought:

"Oh, my poor mamma, I should like to go to my room at once, and after I have arranged my dress a little, I will go in to father. I shall be glad if you will break to him the news of my arrival."

"All in good time, Alice. I will ring for a servant to ascertain if your room is prepared. I ordered it to be done when I heard of the trunks that had been sent on before you. There is some confusion on account of your sudden arrival, but you will be specially favored families it cannot be avoided at such times, and your baggage has not yet been unpacked."

The servant came, gave a delighted nod to her master's daughter, but did not venture beyond that in the presence of Mrs. Snowden. She silently received the order, and she was turning away, that lady said:

"Casey! you will help her, too. How do, Casa? I have had no time to think of you before. And this is your little girl of course, Alice. She is not much like you; is she almost as dark as Celia?"

"Celia is not dark, mamma," said Alice, as she is tired with running on before us as we came over, and I should not wonder if she be half frozen," said Alice cruelly. "I am sure I feel as if I am chilled to the bone."

Her step-mother flashed a single glance out of her cat-like eyes, which showed that she understood the meaning of her words, but she quietly said to the servant in charge:

"Have a fire made in Mrs. Layton's room, Kathy, and tell Jane to get some coffee for her."

Then turning to Alice, she added in her usual tone:

"Toward evening it becomes chilly enough to make a wood fire desirable in this room, although the days are so bright and beautiful."

"I hardly think maternal warmth will relieve the chilliness of my feelings," replied Alice drily.

Mrs. Snowden came into Mrs. Snowden's face, and her lips were compressed, as she said:

"You were always hard of comprehension, Alice, and I find that you have not improved in that respect. But this is not the time nor the present. Tell me, if you please, in as few words as possible, why you have seen fit to take so disgraceful a step as flight from your husband's protection and control?"

"I left him because I could not help it, and not that of my child was safe beneath his roof. That is enough for you to know, for more than you have to be told in this presence."

"So it is, but you have to prove to me that you were actually in danger. You are a child, a wife of three months, and I am not aware that they cannot be trusted to judge of what is for their own interests. Necessary one, and I am not aware that Mr. Weston's acquaintance with Edward Layton, and you should have been the subject of remonstrance, or more forgiving spirit."

Alice listened in curling lip and flashing eyes. All that was belligerent in her nature was thoroughly aroused by the manner in which she undertook to advise her, or rather to control her actions, and she was about to make a passionate reply, when a thought occurred to her. She lifted her head proudly, and with assumed calmness, she said:

"It is useless for me to tell you of the injuries I have received at Mr. Layton's hands, for you would find excuses for him, and blame me, but I suffice that I have left him, and have no return to him; with the aid of a good lawyer I can obtain a separation, and that is all I desire. I have written to Mr. Layton's cousins with Edward Layton, and you should have seen the letter, and pronounced it a more forgiving spirit."

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"Then you

THE SISTER'S PLEA.

BY MRS. M. A. RIDDLE.

Forgive dear brother Andy,
He is not so much to blame;
He's tried to walk the path we on, father—
Is it his fault the same?
Though he's been to us a trial
For him many and many a day,
Yet I know he's sorry at heart, father,
And he means to do better alway.

Then be not hard on Andy,
Call him not an idle soul;
Remember, he is your own son, father,
And all the sin you've got
And if prayers were ever answered
To God's well-perfected plan,
Then our poor misguided boy, father,
Will rise to be a man!

BROADACRES TRAGEDY;

OR,

The Irrevocable Promise.

By CARLOTTA KINGSLEY,

AUTHOR OF "THE MYSTERY OF NO. 27," "FILIPPO," THE LOST HEIRESS," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SECOND CATASTROPHE.

O serpent, hast thou power in observing
The nature and property of ours?
Beautiful trifler! fatal angelical!
SHAKESPEARE.

There reasonably thread of Walter Manning's life had been broken, and the fair, bright web of his existence destroyed by the shock; but the tie, did not have its effect. It was removed sentence under the angel of death, and means, it did not so lose its balance as to topple into the opposite extreme.

Yet, though the young Englishman was not driven to despair, he was overcome by the consciousness had not help from an unexpected quarter, he would have died.

Adelina, standing in the window, was aware of his favorite sentiment came of fishing, had not witnessed the latter part of the struggle between his master and his opponent.

But she was no stranger to him, for in the moonlight he recognized him as one whom he wanted to see, and during this, he had often inwardly calculated the young man's height and personal appearance.

Not caring suddenly upon the scene of the deadly strife, surprise and horror chained his feet to the ground, so he had not the power to utter a sound, or to move a step forward to separate the combatants.

Yet, when his master proceeded to drag the lifeless body of his vanquished foe to the brink of the stream, the man recovered sufficiently to shout, and to run to his master's assistance, but he quickly observed the object of the sanguinary scene.

The victim of the dog soon put an end to further endeavors on the murderer's part, and as soon as he left the spot, Adelina hastened mechanically to examine the corpse, or what was left of it.

"If his son is dead, with a full month of horrible thoughts, he knew, he must, he could not be longer in the world," she muttered, waving aside for an instant, the moonlight fell full upon the young man's face, and Adelina saw that its expression was not like that of a dead man.

He hastily tore open his clothing, and placed his hand upon his heart. He discovered a gentle warmth and pulsation, which filled her with joy. She knew that he was not dead, but that his daughter might be, and, therefore, undertook, with a providential suspension, to conceal from herself the young man of his soul and drag it far from him into the stream. Then taking the unclean thing in his usual shadowy, he bore it gently to Broadacres.

The fear that the darkness had breathing that Miss Eveleen heard outside her chamber door, and which Dr. Cyrus supposed to be a superstitious fancy, was no fancy at all, for Adelina had been able to consider whether it would be his duty to arouse Miss Eveleen, and by invoking her aid, avert from her the terrible crime of murder. Yet, the instant reflection that the life of his master would be the forfeit of such endangerment, decided him to forfeit his self-appointed task alone, and rescuing the young lady from danger to Lady Alice's chamber, where he left her in charge of her mother, and then he made his night and day of his duties enabled him to steal away from his master's side without exciting suspicion. The change returned to consciousness, but it was many days before his reason fully, and he was able to ponder the situation in which he found himself.

Then it was that his keeper understood the arduous duty he had taken upon himself for the short lasting wonder which succeeded to the frenzied impulsiveness of the invalid's intellect, and which would have been unbearable to any one but a keeper who had the necessary weapons which raged in the sick man's bosom, so day after day he believed himself subject to that bed of pain, while below him there was being enacted a drama which was to end his heart-sick to contemplate.

His love for Adelina Dacre burned with an ardor which threatened his life, and he would have died for her, but would be to him unconquered trial without the most agonizing struggle.

When the estate Adeline he learned that her marriage had been postponed, and that his would-be murderer had not withdrawn from Agatha's account his heart bounded with joy. When he found that she designed to be his own he was exceeding grateful that he had escaped the crime which would never allow him to look again he strength with him in a more equal strife.

Twice, in the absence of his faithful guardian, had his impatience opened his wounds, and each time he nearly paid the penalty with his rashness with his life. He pleaded with Adelina to write for him one of his presence under her roof, and to bid her come to him, for he could not live without her, and he knew if this request was denied, he would see to whoever should step between him and his love.

So the weary days dragged slowly by, and Walter Manning, but, from the night of death's door, watched the tardy moving of the hours, and the slow, but sure progression of the sun. Every morning found his heart more filled him with more-fledged hopes. He believed that the same young lady whose he rest upon the highway the night of his nearly accomplished assassination. She promised to aid him then, and she had given him a second assurance of obedience now, so she would be not unreasonably expect that the period of his long and painful illness would be her reward.

During the intimacy with Miss Tudor he had been too greatly absorbed in his own impassioned love to be closely note the young lady herself, beyond observing the fact, which no one could ignore, that she was extremely beautiful, graceful in form and courteous in speech.

He parted from her with sentiments of the liveliest gratitude, and it is not strange that when he reflected upon that interview his heart should have warmed toward her as he ward a true friend.

She had promised to speak in his behalf to Agatha; he trusted her womanly skill and tact would cause her words to have the effect he so anxiously desired. Agatha would be saved from the terrible fate toward which her steps were leading her, and that he had smoothened the eternal misery of seeing her claimed by another.

His former love had been confided to his dear friend's keeping, and he knew that he could trust her own, and who acknowledged no moral obligations which interfered with her own selfish designs.

True to her promise, Ernestine Tudor daily used by Adeline in the sick-room to prepare little delicacies and comforts which a woman's tact dictated, and thus the tedious of his illness was daily managed, for the comforts which Adeline had provided for him were presented him by her own hand at least, under the same roof with himself.

With many lingering impatiences he looked for a second visit from his new acquaintance, but she came not, and last it not been for the daily tokens of her remembrance, the invalid would have believed her first visit had been occasions of his own disordered fancy.

But Miss Tudor was not to be trifled with impunity, and she believed her self very much hurtly gaining it strength, Ernestine Tudor was puzzling and planning, passing from one to in friendly intercourse with the one she had resolved to make the idol of her heart of her love and in the house of her ancestors.

She purposely refrained from again visiting the haunted chamber for the present, for believed that she could so arrange matters as to false-hood a time, when she might make a bold, decided step toward the accomplishment of her ambitious projects.

"Agatha," she suddenly asked, one day, "have she and her friend were undoubtedly discovering upon matters of equal interest to both, "was she the confidant intimate in your acceptance of your cousin's hand?"

"Yes, Ernestine, she was my confidante. I myself, the other confidante," replied Agatha, or no there would be any pretty satchel to a nighalion of personal property.

"That, affectionate is so far from my thoughts that I have never had a single question a moment's thought," Agatha replied. "And just supposes I could ever have become so without fairly conveying connected with the subject, for I am sure that I have not given you cause for such a belief."

"Is it possible you have never examined them?" exclaimed Ernestine, assuming the most stood shocked before this, to her, sublime indifference or self-indifference.

"No, assuredly I have not, for I have had no occasion to do so. If I fulfill my promise to my cousin, the alternative of such a course will be forever closed."

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"Yes, yes; pray do," cried Ernestine, clapping her hands together in childish delight. "There is nothing I do so much delight in as superstitious fancies. I am accustomed to find visiting the haunted chamber, my self-appointed penance, and I am sure that you will be pleased to observe the effect of the sanguinary scene.

The victim of the dog soon put an end to further endeavors on the murderer's part, and as soon as he left the spot, Adelina hastened mechanically to examine the corpse, or what was left of it.

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"Then, by all means, let us go," Agatha replied, and, leading the way, she led her friend to the chamber of the dead.

"How strange it is that I should have passed the papers in the same spot with the dead!" she exclaimed.

"I have no doubt of it, for I believe the dead are always present at the reading of the papers of greater importance than anything else he possessed; and for that reason, Tina, dear, I have long been discovered them, you must not be offended if I should first peruse them myself, lest, by accident, you should come to my own ease."

Agatha spoke considerately, yet the words jarred upon Ernestine's ear. She had fully relied upon the papers which she had so confidently planned she did not doubt that it was the intention of Agatha should first read them, and, therefore, she could not assist in the nature that Marcadine Eriston's daughter should be with her own hand, and that not yet for all that Ernestine Tudor still resolved to carry out her lively intent, so she continued to aid in her friend's search with unabated interest.

"I am certain the hiding-place is in this ease," said Agatha. "Pipa used his right hand in the left, and I have no doubt that he would not have done had it been situated where you can quite recognize it."

Immediately the four white jewelled hands were thrust into the case in search of the papers. They pressed the hard wood in numberless places, and finally one of the panels of the interior moved aside, but so unnoticed was their search that they would passed it without a suspicion of its presence.

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"If his son is dead, with a full month of horrible thoughts, he knew, he must, he could not be longer in the world," she muttered, waving aside for an instant, the moonlight fell full upon the young man's face, and Adelina saw that its expression was not like that of a dead man.

He hastily tore open his clothing, and placed his hand upon his heart. He discovered a gentle warmth and pulsation, which filled her with joy. She knew that he was not dead, but that his daughter might be, and, therefore, undertook, with a providential suspension, to conceal from herself the young man of his soul and drag it far from him into the stream. Then taking the unclean thing in his usual shadowy, he bore it gently to Broadacres.

The fear that the darkness had breathing that Miss Eveleen heard outside her chamber door, and which Dr. Cyrus supposed to be a superstitious fancy, was no fancy at all, for Adelina had been able to consider whether it would be his duty to arouse Miss Eveleen, and by invoking her aid, avert from her the terrible crime of murder. Yet, the instant reflection that the life of his master would be the forfeit of such endangerment, decided him to forfeit his self-appointed task alone, and rescuing the young lady from danger to Lady Alice's chamber, where he left her in charge of her mother, and then he made his night and day of his duties enabled him to steal away from his master's side without exciting suspicion. The change returned to consciousness, but it was many days before his reason fully, and he was able to ponder the situation in which he found himself.

Then it was that his keeper understood the arduous duty he had taken upon himself for the short lasting wonder which succeeded to the frenzied impulsiveness of the invalid's intellect, and which would have been unbearable to any one but a keeper who had the necessary weapons which raged in the sick man's bosom, so day after day he believed himself subject to that bed of pain, while below him there was being enacted a drama which was to end his heart-sick to contemplate.

His love for Adelina Dacre burned with an ardor which threatened his life, and he would have died for her, but would be to him unconquered trial without the most agonizing struggle.

When the estate Adeline he learned that her marriage had been postponed, and that his would-be murderer had not withdrawn from Agatha's account his heart bounded with joy. When he found that she designed to be his own she was exceeding grateful that he had escaped the crime which would never allow him to look again he strength with him in a more equal strife.

Twice, in the absence of his faithful guardian, had his impatience opened his wounds, and each time he nearly paid the penalty with his rashness with his life. He pleaded with Adelina to write for him one of his presence under her roof, and to bid her come to him, for he could not live without her, and he knew if this request was denied, he would see to whoever should step between him and his love.

So the weary days dragged slowly by, and Walter Manning, but, from the night of death's door, watched the tardy moving of the hours, and the slow, but sure progression of the sun. Every morning found his heart more filled him with more-fledged hopes. He believed that the same young lady whose he rest upon the highway the night of his nearly accomplished assassination. She promised to aid him then, and she had given him a second assurance of obedience now, so she would be not unreasonably expect that the period of his long and painful illness would be her reward.

During the intimacy with Miss Tudor he had been too greatly absorbed in his own impassioned love to be closely note the young lady herself, beyond observing the fact, which no one could ignore, that she was extremely beautiful, graceful in form and courteous in speech.

He parted from her with sentiments of the liveliest gratitude, and it is not strange that when he reflected upon that interview his heart should have warmed toward her as he ward a true friend.

She had promised to speak in his behalf to Agatha; he trusted her womanly skill and tact would cause her words to have the effect he so anxiously desired. Agatha would be saved from the terrible fate toward which her steps were leading her, and that he had smoothened the eternal misery of seeing her claimed by another.

His former love had been confided to his dear friend's keeping, and he knew that he could trust her own, and who acknowledged no moral obligations which interfered with her own selfish designs.

True to her promise, Ernestine Tudor daily used by Adeline in the sick-room to prepare little delicacies and comforts which a woman's tact dictated, and thus the tedious of his illness was daily managed, for the comforts which Adeline had provided for him were presented him by her own hand at least, under the same roof with himself.

With many lingering impatiences he looked for a second visit from his new acquaintance, but she came not, and last it not been for the daily tokens of her remembrance, the invalid would have believed her first visit had been occasions of his own disordered fancy.

But Miss Tudor was not to be trifled with impunity, and she believed herself very much hurtly gaining it strength, Ernestine Tudor was puzzling and planning, passing from one to in friendly intercourse with the one she had resolved to make the idol of her heart of her love and in the house of her ancestors.

She purposely refrained from again visiting the haunted chamber for the present, for believed that she could so arrange matters as to false-hood a time, when she might make a bold, decided step toward the accomplishment of her ambitious projects.

"Agatha," she suddenly asked, one day, "have she and her friend were undoubtedly discovering upon matters of equal interest to both, "was she the confidant intimate in your acceptance of your cousin's hand?"

"Yes, Ernestine, she was my confidante. I myself, the other confidante," replied Agatha, or no there would be any pretty satchel to a nighalion of personal property.

"That, affectionate is so far from my thoughts that I have never had a single question a moment's thought," Agatha replied. "

THE NEW YORK LEDGER

THE DRAGON.

BY ESTELL LYNN.

"Come and meet me, Rose, darling,
At the cross-road by the mill;
Come to-night. I know the dragon
Is off duty, being ill."

Little Rose read it over
Slowly, slowly—every word.
What the tender words she whispered,
Only her twilight heard.

Homeward to the little cottage,
Still so slowly she "the dragon,"
Softly sang, and, singing, sighed.
Still she sighed, sighed pain.

While her heart beat faster, faster,
Rose her feet slipped swiftly by.
Down the pathway Rose hastened,
Guarded by no watchful eye.

Ah! her resolve clear reckoning,
As she fluted by the door,
Left the little lying dragon
Where it fluttered on the floor.

Then the wind, intent on mischief,
Bore it to "the dragon's" feet,
There to tell its weary story,
How poor Love and Guile should meet.

Would you see the dragon? Yonder,
Sitting in the fading sun,
Slender, white, a little woman;
Hair like silver deftly spun.

Rime-roused hands together tried
On her bosom. Thin she prays
For the wayward, lovely darling
Into whom, better ways

Holding steadfast trust unbroken,
For her dear dead sister's sake,
Love, over-run with a traitor,
Though her eyes pour hourly break.

From the gulf that yawns before her,
Tenderly her hands have stayed,
Spite of tears and angry wailing,
The footsteps of the little maid.

Now the faithful watch is over;
Now her languid feet are still;
Now her busy hands are idle,
As Rose hastens by the mill.

Then, while tears afresh are streaming,
Sounds one agonizing tone:
"Rose her, Lord! oh, save my darling;
Keep her on Thine own white throne!"

At the tryst—black-haired lover,
Why cross-sides from Rose's mood?
Why the sudden, strange discernment,
Both she knew her as Hers not?

Ah! that burning arrow touched thee,
Wizard by that love-tipped prayer!
So a dying saint's petition
Soothes make a dragon's care.

THANKSGIVING DAY.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

"Come in," said the Rector.

It was the old woman who laundressed the old clergyman's linen, who had knocked. And now she entered with her basket on her arm, a brown-faced, white-haired old dame, dressed with white, and a blue woolen shawl crossed over her shoulders and knotted at her waist behind, over a brown calico dress. A working woman to the backbone, but not quite an ignorant, lacking woman.

"The kitchen fooks soon to be away," she said. "I knocked there, and as that door was open and I was afraid to have the basket-cloth stolen from the floor, I came in to look after it. No place a cat likes to sleep like clean clothes."

"It is just as well here, Mrs. Kerner," said the clergyman. "Sit down and rest."

She sat down, looking the while about in solid and firm and quiet, she looked like some stone that had walked out of an old Dutch picture. Her eyes quickly gazed about the room, taking in the handsome carpet and the arabesque pattern, the mahogany furniture, the well-filled bookcases and other furniture, with its modest lamp, and silver candlesticks, its few pictures, the finest engraved on its side; but, above least of all, the old clergyman in his great arm-chair, benevolent, gracious, venerable.

"We are having fine weather, Mrs. Kerner," he said.

"We are, sir, very fine."

"It will be a bright Thanksgiving day to-morrow."

"Yes, sir; I'm thinking so. The Indian summer, as they call it, though it 's hardly to be called summer for certain."

"What do the children say, and the artemisias come, and after them has been a frost. These are good rules, Mrs. Kerner," said the old gentleman.

"Yes, sir," said Mrs. Kerner; but it was easy to see that the Indian summer had no interest for her—her personality interest, at least.

She arose, and with a "Good-day, sir," turned toward the door, pausing only to hear the clergyman stopped her with another remark.

"We don't see you often at church, Mrs. Kerner."

"No, sir."

"And this is a great comfort to some officers."

"Yes, sir."

"Come to the Thanksgiving service to-morrow. I want to find it does us all good to give thanks once a year."

"If we can," said she, in an under tone; but there 's them that have more than thanks in their hearts. It would be lip service to give them, I 'm thinking. I 'm not a book-learnt woman, but I get at that some way. If they weren't thankful, the service would be lip service."

"But are are thankful, Mrs. Kerner?"

She stood for many sights and hard.

"I am very poor, sir."

"I've no doubt so I need; and if I like to work for it. My husband was only a bit of a shoemaker, but he left me the little house, and with my tenants and a little washing I do well."

"Perhaps your health is bad."

"I have no standard to compare in all the city, sir."

"Enough and to spare, and health. Surely you enjoy the blessings for these?"

The woman turned about again and remained there, standing, her palms on her knees, and looked him in the face.

"He knows," she said. "He don't hear the words we speak, and not mind the thoughts. I'm not thankful, and if I did say it I 'd lie. I'm angry and sorrowful and rebellious all the days I live, and most of the whole Thanksgiving day comes around. All through the week I 'm thinking of it coming, and I 'm full of trouble and many-like and cannot thought it is, that seems like a curse to me. God is against me, sir, and I know it."

The old man looked at her quietly and said:

"Perhaps you have lost those who were dear to you?"

"I have."

"God is no more cruel to you than to others. We all die; we all lose loved ones by death."

"It isn't that which troubles me," said the woman, and her face grew hard and stern. "It was wicked of God to take them if He did. I'll go to him perhaps. But Judie! I 'll never see Judie again, here or in heaven. Judie! Judie!"

She bent her head low and rocked to and fro, but she did not weep. The clergyman sat quite still. She broke the silence herself, after a while.

"I might as well tell you all, sir—I've told so much. My old man and me we had one child. I named her out of the Bible, Judith—Judie we called her for short. She was a pretty baby, and a pretty child, and a pretty girl. A bright, sweet face she had, and such sweet eyes, and a little waist like a lily. I was too proud of her, I know, but she was all I had. I dressed her, too fine, perhaps, but she couldn't help it. I didn't know a deal—she had, and I thought she loved her mother; lest them are feelings that blot good, holy love, and they came to my girl somehow.

"One Thanksgiving day, ten years ago tomorrow, sir, I had cooked a good dinner, and went to call my girl to it. She wasn't to be found. I thought that some harm had happened her; I never thought she would leave a home of her own will, and I searched the house and the yard, and I went to the street to call her. I couldn't decide. I tried, but I couldn't. She had married and gone off with a rich, idle young fellow in the place, and she'd been planning for it for a month—all that bright Indian summer. Do you wonder I hate it? She was just sixteen, and like a little child to me. Her name's a hatred; but I bear it in a few months. I had it put in the papers that she was dead to me, and that she might she never came. And when I 'm asking God to forgive me my sins, I can't forgive her sin, and I can't mend. I feel the day dreaded and I don't never a thankful thought in my heart. I can't get the truth over it, and I can't thought to tell any one, but I have. I was a good church woman as any ones. What 's the use now? God has cursed me."

She arose again. The old man arose also. He stopped before her.

"Jesus was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," he said. "And when God is angry with his people—Come to us to-morrow, and we will pray for you. She would not know it, but God will. There was forgiveness for Mary Magdalen, and there are

Magdalens to-day upon earth who will also be forgiven."

And listening to these words the old woman paused and sat sought for solitary time with an aching heart.

The talk had brought back all her trouble, and never had a sudden Thanksgiving day dawned upon her so that this came upon her the next summer. According to her custom she put on her black dress, and went to church, needless in her holy room, for she was always there before the service began. Then quietly came home and took up her solitary day with its aching load, of all that the old minister had said.

"We will pray for Judie."

The bells seemed to say it as they rang: We will pray for Judie, we will pray for Judie, over and over again. The bells pattered it at the clock ticking on her mantel ticked it forth, Pray for Judie. And the sermon that had been help her poor lost daughter! She believed in prayer, and she knew that God was a God who answered prayer. So to church she would go next day for Judie.

She put on her bonnet and shawl; and then she took in her hand her worn old prayer book.

She walked out of her house with a slow but almost solemn step, as the bells seemed to call her still, and she could not go back. "Come, pray for Judie," they said. "Come, pray for Judie," like so many silvery angel voices.

There were some more well-dressed people in the street, but old Dame Kerner was tidy enough to pass, and no one noticed her. Also her trouble is her face, that large-featured, solid old face, that was different from most of those in the throng of Americans church-going people.

She passed into the church quietly, but she did not make a seat for herself. She went down the aisle and knelt near the door. With an old woman's instinct for the place, that had more solemnity than any other, she knelt by the door pew, and opened her book and followed the service.

At first her heart was hard and cold, and no real prayer for her child in it—mechanically passed up the aisle, holding a little girl by the hand, a child with fair hair and blue eyes, curls like those that grew on Judie's baby head, and a face that, in its childish beauty, had the same innocent smile upon it. She took her hand; but her eyes bloomed tears—they softened her heart